

The
Death of Wallenstein
1878

S. Das.
Librarian

Uttarpara Joykrishna Public Library
Govt. of West Bengal

[WALLENSTEIN.]

How fared it with the brave and royal Bourbör
 Who sold himself unto his country's foes,
 And pierced the bosom of his father-land?
 Curses were his reward, and men's abhorrence
 Avenged th' unnatural and revolting deed.

ILLO.

Is that thy case?

WALLENSTEIN.

True faith, I tell thee,
 Must ever be the dearest friend of man :
 His nature prompts him to assert its rights.
 The enmity of sects, the rage of parties,
 Long cherish'd envy, jealousy,—unite :
 And all the struggling elements of evil
 Suspend their conflict, and together league
 In one alliance 'gainst their common foe—
 'The savage beast that breaks into the fold,
 Where men repose in confidence and peace.
 For vain were man's own prudence to protect him.
 'Tis only in the forehead nature plants
 The watchful eye—the back, without defence,
 Must find its shield in man's fidelity.

TERZKY.

Think not more meanly of thyself than do
 Thy foes, who stretch their hands with joy to greet thee.
 Less scrupulous far was the Imperial Charles,
 The powerful head of this illustrious house ;
 With open arms he gave the Bourbon welcome ;
 For still by policy the world is ruled.]

SCENE VII.

To these enter the Countess TERZKY.

WALLENSTEIN.

Who send you? There is no business here
 For women.

COUNTESS.

I am come to bid you joy.

WALLENSTEIN.

Terzky; bid her go.

COUNTESS.

Come I perhaps too early? I hope not.

WALLENSTEIN.

Set not this tongue upon me, I entreat you:
You know it is the weapon that destroys me.
I am routed, if a woman but attack me:
I cannot traffic in the trade of words
With that unreasoning sex.

COUNTESS.

I had already
Given the Bohemians a king.

WALLENSTEIN (*sarcastically*).

They have one,

In consequence, no doubt.

COUNTESS (*to the others*).

Ha! what new scruple?

TERZKY.

The Duke will not.

COUNTESS.

He will not what he must!

ILLO.

It lies with you now. Try. For I am silenced,
When folks begin to talk to me of conscience,
And of fidelity.

COUNTESS.

How? then, when all
Lay in the far-off distance, when the road
Stretch'd out before thine eyes interminably,
Then hadst thou courage and resolve; and now,
Now that the dream is being realized,
The purpose ripe, the issue ascertain'd,
Dost thou begin to play the dastard now?
Plann'd merely, 'tis a common felony;
Accomplish'd, an immortal undertaking:
And with success comes pardon hand in hand;
For all event is God's arbitrement.

SERVANT (*enters*).

The Colonel Piccolomini.

COUNTESS (*hastily*).

—Must wait.

WALLENSTEIN.

I cannot see him now. Another time.

SERVANT.

But for two minutes he entreats an audience :
Of the most urgent nature is his business.

WALLENSTEIN.

Who knows what he may bring us ! I will hear him.

COUNTESS (*laughs*).

Urgent for him, no doubt ? but thou may'st wait.

WALLENSTEIN.

What is it ?

COUNTESS

Thou shalt be inform'd hereafter.
First let the Swede and thee be compromised.

[*Exit SERVANT.*

WALLENSTEIN.

If there were yet a choice ! if yet some milder
Way of escape were possible—I still
Will choose it, and avoid the last extreme.

COUNTESS.

Desirest thou nothing further ? Such a way
Lies still before thec. Send this Wrangl off.
Forget thou thy old hopes, cast far away
All thy past life ; determine to commence
A new ouc. Virtue hath her heroes too,
As well as fame and fortune.—To Vienna
Hence—to the Emperor—kneel before the throne ;
Take a full coffer with thee—say aloud,
Thou didst but wish to prove thy fealty ;
Thy whole intention but to dupe the Swede.

ILLO.

For that too 'tis too late. They know too much ;
He would but bear his own head to the block.

COUNTESS.

I fear not that. They have not evidence
To attaint him legally, and they avoid
The avowal of an arbitrary power.
They'll let the Duke resign without disturbance.
I see how all will end. The King of Hungary

Makes his appearance, and 'twill of itself
 Be understood, that then the Duke retires
 There will not want a formal declaration :
 The young King will administer the oath
 To the whole army ; and so all returns
 To the old position. On some morrow morning
 The Duke departs ; and now 'tis stir and bustle
 Within his castles. He will hunt, and build ;
 Superintend his horses' pedigrees,
 Creates himself a court, gives golden keys,
 And introduceth strictest ceremony
 In fine proportions, and nice etiquette ;
 Keeps open table with high cheer : in brief,
 Commenceth mighty King—in miniature.
 And while he prudently demeans himself,
 And gives himself no actual importance,
 He will be let appear whate'er he likos :
 And who dares doubt, that Friedland will appear
 A mighty Prince to his last dying hour ?
 Well now, what then ? Duke Friedland is as others,
 A fire-new Noble, whom the war hath raised
 To price and currency, a Jonah's gourd,
 An over-night creation of court-favour,
 Which with an undistinguishable ease
 Makes Baron or makes Prince.

WALLENSTEIN (*in extreme agitation*).

Take her away.

Let in the young Count Piccolomini.

COUNTESS.

Art thou in earnest ? I entreat thee ! Canst thou
 Consent to bear thyself to thy own grave,
 So ignominiously to be dried up ?
 Thy life, that arrogated such an height
 To end in such a nothing ! To be nothing,
 When one was always nothing, is an evil
 That asks no stretch of patience, a light evil ;
 But to become a nothing, having been—

WALLENSTEIN (*starts up in violent agitation*).
 Show me a way out of this stifling crowd,
 Ye powers of Aidance ! Show me such a way

As I am capable of going. I
 Am no tongue-hero, no fine virtue-prattler;
 I cannot warm by thinking; cannot say
 To the good luck that turns her back upon me,
 Magnanimously; "Go; I need thee not."
 Cease I to work, I am annihilated.
 Dangers nor sacrifices will I shun,
 If so I may avoid the last extreme;
 But ere I sink down into nothingness,
 Leave off so little, who began so great,
 Ere that the world confuses me with those
 Poor wretches, whom a day creates and crumbles,
 This age and after ages * speak my name
 With hate and dread; and Friedland be redemption
 For each accursed deed.

COUNTESS.

What is there here, then,
 So against nature? Help me to perceive it!
 O let not Superstition's nightly goblins
 Subdue thy clear bright spirit! Art thou bid
 To murder?—with abhor'd, accursed poniard,
 To violate the breasts that nourish'd thee?
 That were*against our nature, that might aptly
 Make thy flesh shudder, and thy whole heart sicken †.
 Yet not a few, and for a meaner object,
 Have ventured even this, ay, and perform'd it.
 What is there in thy case so black and monstrous?
 Thou art accused of treason—whether with
 Or without justice is not now the question—
 Thou art lost if thou dost not avail thee quickly
 Of the power which thou possessest—Friedland! Duke!
 Tell me where lives that thing so meek and tame,
 That doth not all his living faculties

* Could I have hazarded such a Germanism, as the use of the word after-world, for posterity,—“Es spreche Welt und *Nachwelt* meinen Namen”—might have been rendered with more literal fidelity:—Let world and after-world speak out my name, etc.

† I have not ventured to affront the fastidious delicacy of our age with a literal translation of this line,

werth

Die Eingeweide schaudernd aufzuregen.

Put forth in preservation of his life ?
 What deed so daring, which necessity
 And desperation will not sanctify ?

WALLENSTEIN.

Once was this Ferdinand so gracious to me ;
 He loved me ; he esteem'd me ; I was placed
 The nearest to his heart. Full many a time
 We like familiar friends, both at one table,
 Have banqueted together. He and I—
 And the young kings themselves held me the bason
 Wherewith to wash me—and is't come to this ?

COUNTESS.

So faithfully preservest thou each small favour,
 And hast no memory for contumelies ?
 Must I remind thee, how at Regensburg
 This man repaid thy faithful services ?
 All ranks and all conditions in the empire
 Thou hadst wronged, to make him great,—hadst loaded on
 thee,
 On *thee*, the hate, the curse of the whole world.
 No friend existed for thee in all Germany,
 And why ? because thou hadst existed only
 For the Emperor. To the Emperor alone
 Clung Friedland in that storm which gather'd round him
 At Regensburg in the Diet—and he dropp'd thee !
 He let thee fall ! he let thee fall a victim
 To the Bavarian, to that insolent !
 Deposed, stript bare of all thy dignity
 And power, amid the taunting of thy foes,
 Thou wert let drop into obscurity.—
 Say not, the restoration of thy honour
 Has made atonement for that first injustice.
 No honest good-will was it that replaced thee ;
 The law of hard necessity replaced thee,
 Which they had fain opposed, but that they could not.

WALLENSTEIN.

Not to their good wishes, that is certain,
 Nor yet to his affection I'm indebted
 For this high office ; and if I abuse it.
 I shall therein abuse no confidence.

COUNTESS.

Affection ! confidence !—they *needed* thee.
Necessity, impetuous remonstrant !
Who not with empty names, or shows of proxy,
Is served, who'll have the thing and not the symbol,
Ever seeks out the greatest and the best,
And at the rudder places *him*, e'en though
She had been forced to take him from the rabble—
She, this Necessity, it was that placed thee
In this high office ; it was she that gave thee
Thy letters patent of inauguration.
For, to the uttermost moment that they can,
This race still help themselves at cheapest rate
With slavish souls, with puppets ! At the approach
Of extreme peril, when a hollow image
Is found a hollow image and no more,
Then falls the power into the mighty hands
Of Nature, of the spirit giant-born,
Who listens only to himself, knows nothing
Of stipulations, duties, reverences,
And, like the emancipated force of fire,
Unmaster'd scorches, ere it reaches them,
Their fine-spun webs, their artificial policy.

WALLENSTEIN.

'Tis true ! they saw me always as I am—
Always ! I did not cheat them in the bargain.
I never held it worth my pains to hide
The bold all-grasping habit of my soul.

COUNTESS

Nay rather—thou hast ever shown thyself
A formidable man, without restraint ;
Hast exercised the full prerogatives
Of thy impetuous nature, which had been
Once granted to thee. Therefore, Duke, not *thou*
Who hast still remained consistent with thyself,
But *they* are in the wrong, who fearing thee,
Entrusted such a power in hand they fear'd.
For, by the laws of Spirit, in the right
Is every individual character
That acts in strict consistence with itself.

Self contradiction is the only wrong.
 Wert thou another being, then, when thou
 Eight years ago pursuedst thy march with fire,
 And sword, and desolation, through the Circles
 Of Germany, the universal scourge,
 Didst mock all ordinances of the empire,
 The fearful rights of strength alone exertedst,
 Trampledst to earth each rank, each magistracy,
 All to extend thy Sultan's domination ?
 Then was the time to break thee in, to curb
 Thy haughty will, to teach thee ordinance.
 But no, the Emperor felt no touch of conscience ;
 What served him pleased him, and without a murmur
 He stamp'd his broad seal on these lawless deeds.
 What at that time was right, because thou didst it
For him, to day is all at once become
 Opprobrious, foul, because it is directed
Against him.—O most flimsy superstition !

WALLENSTEIN (*rising*).

I never saw it in this light before,
 'Tis even so. The Emperor perpetrated
 Deeds through my arm, deeds most unorderly.
 And even this prince's mantle, which I wear,
 I owe to what were services to him,
 But most high misdemeanors 'gainst the empire.

COUNTESS.

Then betwixt thee and him (confess it Friedland !)
 The point can be no more of right and duty,
 Only of power and the opportunity.
 That opportunity, lo ! it comes yonder
 Approaching with swift steeds ; then with a swing
 Throw thyself up into the chariot-seat,
 Seize with firm hand the reins, ere thy opponent
 Anticipate thee, and himself make conquest
 Of the now empty seat. The moment comes ;
 It is already here, when thou must write
 The absolute total of thy life's vast sum.
 The constellations stand victorious o'er thee,
 The planets shoot good fortune in fair junctures,
 And tell thee, "Now's the time !" The starry courses

Hast thou thy life-long measured to no purpose ?
The quadrant and the circle, were they playthings ?

[*Pointing to the different objects in the room*
The zodiacs, the rolling orbs of heaven,
Hast pictured on these walls, and all around thee
In dumb, foreboding symbol, hast thou placed
These seven presiding Lord, of Destiny —
For toys ? Is all this preparation nothing ?
Is there no marrow in this hollow art,
That even to thyself it doth avail
Nothing, and has no influence over thee
In the great moment of decision ? —

WALLENSTEIN (*during this last speech walks up and down with inward struggles, labouring with passion ; stops suddenly, stands still, then interrupting the Countess*).
Send Wrangel to me—I will instantly
Despatch three couriers —

ILLO (*hurrying out*).

God in heaven be praised !

WALLENSTEIN.

It is *his* evil genius and *mine*.
Our evil genius ! It chastises *him*
Through me, the instrument of his ambition ;
And I expect no less, than that Revenge
E'en now is whetting for *my* breast the poniard.
Who sows the serpent's teeth, let him not hope
To reap a joyous harvest. Every crime
Has, in the moment of its perpetration,
Its own avenging angel — dark misgiving,
An ominous sinking at the inmost heart.
He can no longer trust me — Then no longer
Can I retreat — so come that which must come. —
Still destiny preserves its due relations,
The heart within us is its absolute

Vicegerent.

[*To TERZKY.*

Go, conduct you Gustave Wrangel
To my state-cabinet. — Myself will speak to
The couriers. — And despatch immediately
A servant for Octavio Piccolomini.

[*To the COUNTESS, who cannot conceal her triumph.*
No exultation ! woman, triumph not !

For jealous are the Powers of Destiny.
 Joy premature, and shouts ere victory,
 Encroach upon their rights and privileges.
 We sow the seed, and they the growth determine.

[*While he is making his exit the curtain drops.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.

Scene, as in the preceding Act.

WALLENSTEIN, OCTAVIO PICCOLOMINI.

WALLENSTEIN (*coming forward in conversation*).
 He sends me word from Linz, that he lies sick ;
 But I have sure intelligence, that he
 Secretes himself at Frauenberg with Gallas.
 Secure them both, and send them to me hither.
 Remember, thou takest on thee the command
 Of those same Spanish regiments,—constantly
 Make preparation, and be never ready ;
 And if they urge thee to draw out against me,
 Still answer YES, and stand as thou wert fetter'd.
 I know, that it is doing thee a service
 To keep thee out of action in this business.
 Thou lovest to linger on in fair appearances ;
 Steps of extremity are not thy province,
 Therefore have I sought out this part for thee.
 Thou wilt this time be of most service to me
 By thy inertness. The mean time, if fortune
 Declare itself on my side, thou wilt know
 What is to do.

Enter MAX. PICCOLOMINI.

Now go, Octavio.

This night must thou be off, take my own horses :
 Him here I keep with me—make short farewell—
 Trust me, I think, we all shall meet again
 In joy and thriving fortunes.

OCTAVIO (*to his son*).

I shall see you

Yet ere I go.

SCENE II.

WALLENSTEIN, MAX. PICCOLOMINI.

MAX. (*advances to him*).

My General!

WALLENSTEIN.

That I am no longer, if
Thou stylest thyself the Emperor's officer.

MAX.

Then thou wilt leave the army, General?

WALLENSTEIN.

I have renounced the service of the Emperor.

MAX.

And thou wilt leave the army?

WALLENSTEIN.

Rather hope I

To bind it nearer still and faster to me.

[*He seats himself.*

Yes, Max., I have delay'd to open it to thee,
 Even till the hour of acting 'gins to strike.
 Youth's fortunate feeling doth seize easily
 The absolute right, yea, and a joy it is
 To exercise the single apprehension
 Where the sums square in proof;
 But where it happens, that of two sure evils
 One must be taken, where the heart not wholly
 Brings itself back from out the strife of duties,
 There 'tis a blessing to have no election,
 And blank necessity is grace and favour.

—This is now present: do not look behind thee,—
 It can no more avail thee. Look thou forwards!
 Think not! judge not! prepare thyself to act!
 The Court—it hath determined on my ruin,
 Therefore I will be beforehand with them.
 We'll join the Swedes—right gallant fellows are they,
 And our good friends.

[*He stops himself, expecting PICCOLOMINI'S answer.*

I have ta'en thee by surprise. Answer me not.
I grant thee time to recollect thyself.

[He rises, retires at the back of the stage. MAX. remains for a long time motionless, in a trance of excessive anguish. At his first motion WALLENSTEIN returns, and places himself before him.]

MAX.

My General, this day thou makest me
Of age to speak in my own right and person,
For till this day I have been spared the trouble
To find out my own road. Thee have I follow'd
With most implicit unconditional faith,
Sure of the right path if I follow'd thee.
To-day, for the first time, dost thou refer
Me to myself, and forcest me to make
Election between thee and my own heart.

WALLENSTEIN.

Soft cradled thee thy Fortune till to day ;
Thy duties thou couldst exercise in sport,
Indulge all lovely instincts, act for ever
With undivided heart. It can remain
No longer thus. Like enemies, the roads
Start from each other. Duties strive with duties.
Thou must needs choose thy party in the war
Which is now kindling 'twixt thy friend and him
Who is thy Emperor.

MAX.

War ! is that the name ?

War is as frightful as heaven's pestilence.
Yet it is good, is it heaven's will as that is.
Is that a good war, which against the Emperor
Thou wagest with the Emperor's own army?
O God of heaven ! what a change is this.
Beseems it me to offer such persuasion
To thee, who like the fix'd star of the pole
Wert all I gazed at on life's trackless ocean ?
O ! what a rent thou makest in my heart !
The ingrain'd instinct of old reverence,
The holy habit of obedience,
Must I pluck live asunder from thy name ?

Nay, do not turn thy countenance upon me—
 It always was as a god looking upon me!
 Duke Wallenstein, its power has not departed.
 The senses still are in thy bonds, although,
 Bleeding, the soul hath freed itself.

WALLENSTEIN.

Max., hear me.

MAX.

O ! do it not, I pray thee, do it not !
 There is a pure and noble soul within thee,
 Knows not of this unblest unlucky doing.
 Thy will is chaste, it is thy fancy only
 Which hath polluted thee—and innocence,
 It will not let itself be driven away
 From that world-awing aspect. Thou wilt not,
 Thou canst not end in this. It would reduce
 All human creatures to disloyalty
 Against the nobleness of their own nature.
 'Twill justify the vulgar misbelief,
 Which holdeth nothing noble in free will,
 And trusts itself to impotence alone,
 Made powerful only in an unknown power.

WALLENSTEIN.

The world will judge me sternly, I expect it.
 Already have I said to my own self
 All thou canst say to me. Who but avoids
 The extreme, can he by going round avoid it ?
 But hero there is no choice. Yes—I must use
 Or suffer violence—so stands the case,
 There remains nothing possible but that.

MAX.

O that is never possible for thee !
 'Tis the last desperate resource of those
 Cheap souls, to whom their honour, their good name
 Is their poor *saving*, their last worthless *keep*,
 Which having staked and lost, they stake themselves
 In the mad rage of gaming. Thou art rich,
 And glorious ; with an unpolluted heart
 Thou canst make conquest of whate'er seems highest !
 But he, who once hath acted infamy,
 Does nothing more in this world.

WALLENSTEIN (*grasps his hand*).

Calmly, Max.!

Much that is great and excellent will we
 Perform together yet. And if we only
 Stand on the height with dignity, 'tis soon
 Forgotten, Max., by what road we ascended.
 Believe me, many a crown shines spotless now,
 That yet was deeply sullied in the winning.
 To the evil spirit doth the earth belong,
 Not to the good. All, that the powers divine
 Send from above, are universal blessings :
 Their light rejoices us, their air refreshes,
 But never yet was man enrich'd by them :
 In their eternal realm no *property*
 Is to be struggled for—all there is general.
 The jewel, the all-valued gold we win
 From the deceiving Powers, depraved in nature,
 That dwell beneath the day and blessed sun-light.
 Not without sacrifices are they render'd
 Propitious, and there lives no soul on earth
 That e'er retired unsullied from their service.

MAX.

Whate'er is human, to the human being
 Do I allow—and to the vehement
 And striving spirit readily I pardon
 The excess of action ; but to thee, my General !
 Above *all* others make I large concession.
 For thou must move a world, and be the master—
 He kills thee, who condemns thee to inaction.
 So be it then ! maintain thee in thy post
 By violence. Resist the Emperor,
 And if it must be, force with force repel :
 I will not praise it, yet I can forgive it.
 But not—not to the *traitor*—yes !—the word
 Is spoken out—
 Not to the traitor can I yield a pardon.
 That is no mere *excess* ! that is no error
 Of human nature—that is wholly different,
 O that is black, black as the pit of hell !

[WALLENSTEIN *betrays a sudden agitation*.
 Thou canst not hear it named, and wilt thou do it ?

O turn back to thy duty. That thou canst,
 I hold it certain. Send me to Vienna:
 I'll make thy peace for thee with the Emperor.
 He knows thee not. But I do know thee. He
 Shall see thee, Duke! with my unclouded eye,
 And I bring back his confidence to thee.

WALLENSTEIN.

It is too late! Thou knowest not what has happen'd.

MAX.

Were it too late, and were things gone so far,
 That a crime only could prevent thy fall,
 Then—fall! fall honourably, even as thou stood'st,
 Lose the command. Go from the stage of war.
 Thou canst with splendour do it—do it too
 With innocence. Thou hast lived much for others,
 At length live thou for thy own self. I follow thee.
 My destiny I never part from thine.

WALLENSTEIN.

It is too late! Even now, while thou art losing
 Thy words, one after the other are the mile-stones
 Left fast behind by my post couriers,
 Who bear the order on to Prague and Egra.

[MAX. stands as convulsed, with a gesture and countenance expressing the most intense anguish.

Yield thyself to it. We act as we are forced.
 I cannot give assent to my own shame
 And ruin. *Thou*—no—thou canst not forsake me!
 So let us do, what must be done, with dignity,
 With a firm step. What am I doing worse
 Than did famed Cæsar at the Rubicon,
 When he the legions led against his country,
 The which his country had delivered to him?
 Had he thrown down the sword, he had been lost,
 As I were, if I but disarm'd myself.
 I trace out something in me of this spirit;
 Give me his luck, *that other thing* I'll bear.

[MAX. quits him abruptly. WALLENSTEIN startled and overpowered, continues looking after him, and is still in this posture when TERZKY enters.

SCENE III.

WALLENSTEIN, TERZKY.

TERZKY.

Max. Piccolomini just left you ?

WALLENSTEIN.

Where is Wrangel ?

TERZKY.

He is already gone.

WALLENSTEIN.

In such a hurry ?

TERZKY.

It is as if the earth had swallow'd him.

He had scarce left thee, when I went to seek him.

I wish'd some words with him—but he was gone.

How, when, and where, could no one tell me. Nay,

I half believe it was the devil himself ;

A human creature could not so at once

Have vanish'd.

ILLO (*enters*).

Is it true that thou wilt send

Octavio ?

TERZKY.

How, Octavio ! Whither send him ?

WALLENSTEIN.

He goes to Frauenburg, and will lead hither

The Spanish and Italian regiments.

ILLO.

No !

Nay, Heaven forbid !

WALLENSTEIN.

And why should Heaven forbid ?

ILLO.

Him !—that deceiver ! Wouldst thou trust to him

The soldiery ? Him wilt thou let slip from thee,

Now in the very instant that decides us——

TERZKY.

Thou wilt not do this !—No ! I pray thee, no !

WALLENSTEIN.

Ye are whimsical.

ILLO.

O but for this time, Duke,
Yield to our warning ! Let him not depart.

WALLENSTEIN.

And why should I not trust him only this time,
Who have always trusted him ? What, then, has happen'd,
That I should lose my good opinion of him ?
In complaisance to your whims, not my own,
I must, forsooth, give up'a rooted judgment.
Think not I am a woman. Having trusted him
E'en till to-day, to-day too will I trust him.

TERZKY.

Must it be he—he only ? Send another.

WALLENSTEIN.

It must be he, whom I myself have chosen ;
He is well fitted for the business. Therefore
I gave it him.

ILLO.

Because he's an Italian—
Therefore is he well fitted for the business !

WALLENSTEIN.

I know you love them not—nor sire nor son—
Because that I esteem them, love them—visibly
Esteem them, love them more than you and others,
E'en as they merit. Therefore are they eye-blights,
Thorns in your foot-path. But your jealousies,
In what affect they me or my concerns ?
Are they the worse to *me* because you hate them ?
Love or hate one another as you will,
I leave to each man his own moods and likings ;
Yet know the worth of each of you to me.

ILLO.

Von Questenberg, while he was here, was always
Lurking about with this Octavio.

WALLENSTEIN.

It happen'd with my knowledge and permission.

ILLO.

I know that secret messengers came to him
From Gallas —

WALLENSTEIN.

That's not true.

ILLO.

O thou art blind,

With thy deep-seeing eyes !

WALLENSTEIN.

Thou wilt not shake

My faith for me—my faith, which finds itself
On the profoundest science. It 'tis false,
Then the whole science of the stars is false ;
For know, I have a pledge from Fate itself,
That he is the most faithful of my friends.

ILLO.

Hast thou a pledge, that this pledge is not false ?

WALLENSTEIN.

There exist moments in the life of man,
When he is nearer the great Soul of the world
Than is man's custom, and possesses freely
The power of questioning his destiny :
And such a moment 'twas, when in the night
Before the action in the plains of Lützen,
Leaning against a tree, thoughts crowding thoughts,
I look'd out far upon the ominous plain.
My whole life, past and future, in this moment
Before my mind's eye glided in procession,
And to the destiny of the next morning
The spirit, fill'd with anxious presentiment,
Did knit the most removed futurity.
Then said I also to myself, " So many
Dost thou command. They follow all thy stars
And as on some great number set their All
Upon thy single head, and only man
The vessel of thy fortune. Yet a day
Will come, when Destiny shall once more scatter
All these in many a several direction :
Few be they who will stand out faithful to thee." "
I yearn'd to know which one was faithfulest
Of all, this camp included. Great Destiny,
Give me a sign ! And he shall be the man,
Who, on the approaching morning, comes the first
To meet me with a token of his love :

And thinking this, I fell into a slumber.
 Then midmost in the battle was I led
 In spirit. Great the pressure and the tumult!
 Then was my horse kill'd under me: I sank;
 And over me away, all unconcernedly,
 Drove horse and rider—and thus trod to pieces
 I lay, and panted like a dying man;
 Then seized me suddenly a saviour arm;
 It was Octavio's—I awoke at once,
 'Twas broad day, and *Octavio* stood before me.
 "My brother," said he, "do not ride to-day
 The dapple, as you're wont; but mount the horse
 Which I have chosen for thee. Do it, brother!
 In love to me. A strong dream warn'd me so."
 It was the swiftness of this horse that snatch'd me
 From the hot pursuit of Bannier's dragoons.
 My cousin rode the dapple on that day,
 And never more saw I or horse or rider.

ILLO.

That was a chance.

WALLENSTEIN (*significantly*).

There's no such thing as chance;
 [And what to us seems merest accident
 Springs from the deepest source of destiny.]
 In brief, 'tis sign'd and seal'd that this Octavio
 Is my good angel—and now no word more.

[*He is retiring.*

TERZKY.

This is my comfort—Max. remains our hostage.

ILLO.

And he shall never stir from here alive.

WALLENSTEIN (*stops and turns himself round*).

Are ye not like the women, who for ever
 Only recur to their first word, although
 One had been talking reason by the hour!
 Know, that the human being's thoughts and deeds
 Are not like ocean billows, blindly moved.
 The inner world, his microcosmus, is
 The deep shaft, out of which they spring eternally.
 They grow by certain laws, like the tree's fruit—
 No juggling chance can metamorphose them.

Have I the human *kernel* first examined?
Then I know, too, the future will and action. [Exeunt.

SCENE IV.

Chamber in the residence of Piccolomini.

OCTAVIO PICCOLOMINI (*attired for travelling*), AN ADJUTANT.
[OCTAVIO.

Is the detachment here?

ADJUTANT.

It waits below.

OCTAVIO.

And are the soldiers trusty, Adjutant?
Say, from what regiment hast thou chosen them?

ADJUTANT.

From Tiefenbach's

OCTAVIO.

That regiment is loyal,
Keep them in silence in the inner court,
Unseen by all, and when the signal peals
Then close the doors, keep watch upon the house,
And all ye meet be instantly arrested. [Exit Adjutant.
I hope indeed I shall not need their service,
So certain feel I of my well laid plans;
But when an empire's safety is at stake
'Twere better too much caution than too little.]

SCENE V.

A Chamber in PICCOLOMINI'S Dwelling-House.

OCTAVIO PICCOLOMINI, ISOLANI, entering.

ISOLANI.

Here am I—Well! who comes yet of the others?

OCTAVIO (*with an air of mystery*).

But, first, a word with you, Count Isolani.

ISOLANI (*assuming the same air of mystery*).

Will it explode, ha?—Is the Duke about
To make the attempt? In me, friend, you may place
Full confidence.—Nay, put me to the proof.

OCTAVIO.

That may happen.

ISOLANI.

Noble brother, I am

Not one of those men who in words are valiant,

And when it comes to action skulk away.
 The Duke has acted towards me as a friend.
 God knows it is so; and I owe him all—
 He may rely on my fidelity.

OCTAVIO.

That will be seen hereafter.

ISOLANI.

Be on your guard,
 All think not as I think: and there are many
 Who still hold with the Court—yes, and they say
 That those stolen signatures bind them to nothing

[OCTAVIO.

Indeed! Pray name to me the chiefs that think so.

ISOLANI.

Plague on them! all the Germans think so;
 Esterhazy, Kaunitz, Deodati, too,
 Insist upon obedience to the Court.]

OCTAVIO.

I am rejoiced to hear it.

ISOLANI.

You rejoice!

OCTAVIO.

That the Emperor has yet such gallant servants,
 And loving friends.

ISOLANI.

Nay, jeer not, I entreat you.
 They are no such worthless fellows, I assure you.

OCTAVIO.

I am assured already. God forbid
 That I should jest!—In very serious earnest,
 I am rejoiced to see an honest cause
 So strong.

ISOLANI.

The Devil!—what?—why, what means this?
 Are you not, then—For what, then, am I here?

OCTAVIO.

That you may make full declaration, whether
 You will be call'd the friend or enemy
 Of the Emperor.

ISOLANI (*with an air of defiance*).

That declaration, friend,

I'll make to him in whom a right is placed
To put that question to me.

OCTAVIO.

Whether, Count,

That right is mine, this paper may instruct you.

ISOLANI (*stammering*).

Why,—why—what! this is the Emperor's hand and seal!

[*Reads.*]

“Whereas, the officers collectively
Throughout our army will obey the orders
Of the Lieutenant-General Piccolomini.
As from ourselves.”—*Hem!*—Yes! so!—Yes! yes!—
I—I give you joy, Lieutenant-General!

OCTAVIO.

And you submit you to the order?

ISOLANI.

I—

But you have taken me so by surprise—
Time for reflection one *must* have—

OCTAVIO.

Two minutes.

ISOLANI.

My God! But then the case is—

OCTAVIO.

Plain and simple.

You must declare you, whether you determine
To act a treason 'gainst your Lord and Sovereign,
Or whether you will serve him faithfully.

ISOLANI.

Treason!—My God!—But who talks then of treason?

OCTAVIO.

That is the case. The Prince-duke is a traitor—
Means to lead over to the enemy
The Emperor's army.—Now, Count!—brief and full—
Say, will you break your oath to the Emperor?
Sell yourself to the enemy?—Say, will you?

ISOLANI.

What mean you? I—I break my oath, d'ye say,
To his Imperial Majesty?
Did I say so!—When, when have I said that?

OCTAVIO.

You have not said it yet—not yet. This instant
I wait to hear, Count, whether you *will* say it.

ISOLANI.

Ay! that delights me now, that you yourself
Bear witness for me that I never said so.

OCTAVIO.

And you renounce the Duke then?

ISOLANI.

If he's planning
Treason—why, treason breaks all bonds asunder.

OCTAVIO.

And are determined, too, to fight against him?

ISOLANI.

He has done me service—but if he's a villain,
Perdition seize him!—All scores are rubb'd off.

OCTAVIO.

I am rejoiced that you are so well disposed.
This night, break off in the utmost secrecy
With all the light-arm'd troops—it must appear
As came the order from the Duke himself.
At Frauenburg's the place of rendezvous;
There will Count Gallas give you further orders.

ISOLANI.

It shall be done.—But you'll remember me
With the Emperor—how well-disposed you found me.

OCTAVIO.

I will not fail to mention it honourably.

[*Exit Isolani.* A Servant enters.

What, Colonel Butler!—Show him up.

ISOLANI (*returning*).

Forgive me too my bearish ways, old father!
Lord God! how should I know, then, what a great
Person I had before me.

OCTAVIO.

No excuses!

ISOLANI.

I am a merry lad, and if at time
A rash word might escape me 'gainst the Court
Amidst my wine—You know no harm was meant. [*Exit.*

OCTAVIO.

You need not be uneasy on that score.
That has succeeded. Fortune favour us
With all the others only but as much !

SCENE VI.

OCTAVIO PICCOLOMINI, BUTLER.
BUTLER.

At your command Lieutenant-general.

OCTAVIO.

Welcome, as honour'd friend and visitor.

BUTLER.

You do me too much honour.

OCTAVIO (*after both have seated themselves*).

You have not

Return'd the advances which I made you yesterday—
Misunderstood them as mere empty forms.
That wish proceeded from my heart—I was
In earnest with you—for 'tis now a time
In which the honest should unite most closely.

BUTLER.

'Tis only the like-minded can unite.

OCTAVIO.

True! and I name all honest men like-minded.
I never charge a man but with those acts
To which his character deliberately
Impels him; for alas! the violence
Of blind misunderstandings often thrust
The very best of us from the right track.
You came through Frauenburg. Did the Count Gallas
Say nothing to you? Tell me. He's my friend.

BUTLER.

His words were lost on *me*.

OCTAVIO.

It grieves me sorely,
To hear it: for his counsel was most wise.
I had myself the like to offer.

BUTLER.

Spare

Yourself the trouble—me th' embarrassment,
To have deserved so ill your good opinion.

OCTAVIO.

The time is precious—let us talk openly.
 You know how matters stand here. Wallenstein
 Meditates treason—I can tell you further,
 He has committed treason; but few hours
 Have past, since he a covenant concluded
 With the enemy. The messengers are now
 Full on their way to Egra^a and to Prague.
 To-morrow he intends to lead us over
 To the enemy. But he deceives himself;
 For Prudence wakes—The Emperor has still
 Many and faithful friends here, and they stand
 In closest union, mighty though unseen.
 This manifesto sentences the Duke—
 Recalls the obedience of the army from him,
 And summons all the loyal, all the honest,
 To join and recognise in me their leader.
 Choose—will you share with us an honest cause?
 Or with the evil share an evil lot?

BUTLER (*rises*).

His lot is mine.

OCTAVIO.

Is that your last resolve?

BUTLER.

It is.

OCTAVIO.

Nay, but bethink you, Colonel Butler!
 As yet you have time. Within my faithful breast
 That rashly utter'd word remains interr'd.
 Recall it, Butler! choose a better party:
 You have not chosen the right one.

BUTLER (*going*).

Any other
 Commands for me, Lieutenant-General?

OCTAVIO.

See your white hairs: recall that word!

BUTLER.

Farewell!

OCTAVIO.

What! Would you draw this good and gallant sword
 In such a cause? Into a curse would you

Transform the gratitude which you have earn'd
By forty years' fidelity from Austria ?

BUTLER (*laughing with bitterness*).

Gratitude from the House of Austria ! [He is going.

OCTAVIO (*permits him to go as far as the door, then calls after him*).

Butler !

BUTLER..

What wish you ?

OCTAVIO.

How was't with the Count ?

BUTLER.

Count ? what ?

OCTAVIO (*coldly*).

The title that you wish'd, I mean.

BUTLER (*starts in sudden passion*).

Hell and damnation !

OCTAVIO (*coldly*).

You petition'd for it—

And your petition was repelled—Was it so ?

BUTLER.

Your insolent scoff shall not go by unpunish'd.

Draw !

OCTAVIO.

Nay ! your sword to 'ts sheath ! and tell me calmly,
How all that happen'd. I will not refuse you
Your satisfaction afterwards. Calmly, Butler !

BUTLER.

Be the whole world acquainted with the weakness
I'or which I never can forgive myself.

Lieutenant General ! Yes ; I have ambition.

Ne'er was I able to endure contempt.

It stung me to the quick, that birth and title

Should have more weight than merit has in the army.

I would fain not be meaner than my equal,

So in an evil hour I let myself

Be tempted to that measure. It was folly !

But yet so hard a penance it deserved not.

It might have been refused ; but wherefore barb

And venom the refusal with contempt ?

Why dash to earth and crush with heaviest scorn
 The grey-hair'd man, the faithful veteran?
 Why to the baseness of his parentage
 Refer him with such cruel roughness, only
 Because he had a weak hour and forgot himself?
 But nature gives a sting e'en to the worm
 Which wanton Power treads on in sport and insult.

OCTAVIO.

You must have been calumniated, Guess you
 The enemy who did you this ill service?

BUTLER.

Be't who it will—a most low-hearted scoundrel!
 Some vile court-minion must it be, some Spaniard;
 Some young squire of some ancient family,
 In whose light I may stand; some envious knave,
 Stung to his soul by my fair self-earn'd honours!

OCTAVIO.

But tell me, did the Duke approve that measure?

BUTLER.

Himself impell'd me to it, used his interest
 In my behalf with all the warmth of friendship.

OCTAVIO.

Ay? are you sure of that?

BUTLER.

I read the letter.

OCTAVIO.

And so did I—but the contents were different.

[BUTLER is suddenly struck.

By chance I'm in possession of that letter—
 Can leave it to your own eyes to convince you.

[He gives him the letter.

BUTLER.

Ha! what is this?

OCTAVIO.

I fear me, Colonel Butler,
 An infamous game have they been playing with you.
 The Duke, you say, impell'd you to this measure?
 Now, in this letter, talks he in contempt
 Concerning you; counsels the minister

To give sound chastisement to your conceit,
For so he calls it.

[BUTLER reads through the letter; his knees tremble,
he seizes a chair, and sinks down in it.

You have no enemy, no persecutor;
There's no one wishes ill to you. Ascribe
The insult you received to the Duke only.
His aim is clear and palpable. He wish'd
To tear you from your Emperor: he hoped
To gain from your revenge what he well knew
(What your long-tried fidelity convinced him)
He ne'er could dare expect from your calm reason.
A blind tool would he make you, in contempt
Use you, as means of most abandoned ends.
He has gained his point. Too well has he succeeded
In luring you away from that good path
On which you had been journeying forty years!

BUTLER (*his voice trembling*).

Can e'er the Emperor's Majesty forgive me?

OCTAVIO.

More than forgive you. He would fain compensate
For that affront, and most unmerited grievance
Sustain'd by a deserving gallant veteran.
From his free impulse he confirms the present,
Which the Duke made you for a wicked purpose.
The regiment, which you now command, is yours.

[BUTLER attempts to rise, sinks down again. *He labours inwardly with violent emotions; tries to speak, and cannot.* At length he takes his sword from the belt, and offers it to PICCOLOMINI.

OCTAVIO.

What wish you? Recollect yourself, friend.

BUTLER.

Take it.

OCTAVIO.

But to what purpose? Calm yourself.

BUTLER.

O take it!

I am no longer worthy of this sword.

OCTAVIO.

Receive it then anew, from my hands—and

Wear it with honour for the right cause ever.

BUTLER.

— Perjure myself to such a gracious Sovereign !

OCTAVIO.

You'll make amends. Quick ! break off from the Duke !

BUTLER.

Break off from him !

OCTAVIO.

What now ? Bethink thyself.

BUTLER (*no longer governing his emotion*).
Only break off from him ? He dies ! he dies !

OCTAVIO.

Come after me to Frauenburg, where now
All who are loyal, are assembling under
Counts Altringer and Gallas. Many others
I've brought to a remembrance of their duty:
This night be sure that you escape from Pilsen.

BUTLER (*strides up and down in excessive agitation*, then steps
up to OCTAVIO with resolved countenance).

Count Piccolomini ! dare that man speak
Of honour to you, who once broke his troth.

OCTAVIO.

He, who repents so deeply of it, dares.

BUTLER.

Then leave me here upon my word of honour !

OCTAVIO.

What's your design ?

BUTLER.

Leave me and my regiment.

OCTAVIO.

I have full confidence in you. But tell me
What are you brooding ?

BUTLER.

That the deed will tell you.

Ask me no more at present. Trust to me.

Ye may trust safely. By the living God

Ye give him over, not to his good angel !

Farewell. [Exit BUTLER.

SERVANT (*enters with a billet*).

A stranger left it, and is gone.

The Prince-Duke's horses wait for you below.

[Exit Servant.

OCTAVIO (*reads*).

"Be sure make haste! Your faithful Isolan."
—O that I had but left this town behind me.
To split upon a rock so near the haven!—
Away! This is no longer a safe place for me!
Where can my son be tarrying!"

SCENE VII.

OCTAVIO and MAX. PICCOLOMINI.

MAX. enters almost in a state of derangement, from extreme agitation; his eyes roll wildly, his walk is unsteady, and he appears not to observe his father, who stands at a distance, and gazes at him with a countenance expressive of compassion. He paces with long strides through the chamber, then stands still again, and at last throws himself into a chair, staring vacantly at the object directly before him.

OCTAVIO (*advances to him*).

I am going off, my son.

[Receiving no answer, he takes his hand.

My son, farewell.

MAX.

Farewell.

OCTAVIO.

Thou wilt soon follow me?

MAX.

I follow thee?

Thy way is crooked—it is not my way.

[OCTAVIO drops his hand, and starts back.

O, hadst thou been but simple and sincere,

Ne'er had it come to this—all had stood otherwise.

He had not done that foul and horrible deed,

The virtuous had retain'd their influence o'er him :

He had not fallen into the snares of villains.

Wherefore so like a thief, and thief's accomplice

Didst creep behind him, lurking for thy prey!

O, unblest falsehood! Mother of all evil!

Thou misery-making demon, it is thou

That sink'st us in perdition. Simple truth,

Sustainer of the world, had saved us all!

Father, I will not, I can not excuse thee !
 Wallenstein has deceived me—O, most foully !
 But thou hast acted not much better.

OCTAVIO.

Son !

My son, ah ! I forgive thy agony !

MAX. (*rises and contemplates his father with looks of suspicion*).

Was't possible ? hadst thou the heart, my father,
 Hadst thou the heart to drive it to such lengths,
 With cold premeditated purpose ? Thou—
 Hadst thou the heart to wish to see him guilty
 Rather than saved ? Thou risest by his fall.
 Octavio, 'twill not please me.

OCTAVIO.

God in heaven !

MAX.

O, woo is me ! sure I have changed my nature.
 How comes suspicion here—in the free soul ?
 Hope, confidence, belief, are gone ; for all
 Lied to me, all that I e'er loved or honoured.
 No, no ! not all ! She—she yet lives for me,
 And she is true, and open as the heavens !
 Deceit is everywhere, hypocrisy,
 Murder, and poisoning, treason, perjury :
 The single holy spot is our love,
 The only unprofaned in human nature.

OCTAVIO.

Max.—we will go together. 'Twill be better.

MAX.

What ? ere I've taken a last parting leave,
 The very last—no, never !

OCTAVIO.

Spare thyself

The pang of necessary separation.
 Come with me ! Come, my son !

[Attempts to take him with him.

MAX.

No ! as sure as God lives, no !

OCTAVIO (*more urgently*).

Come with me, I command thee ! I, thy father.

MAX.

Command me what is human. I stay here.

OCTAVIO.

Max.! in the Emperor's name I bid thee come.

MAX.

No Emperor has power to prescribe
 Laws to the heart; and wouldest thou wish to rob me
 Of the sole blessing which my fate has left me,
 Her sympathy? Must then a cruel deed
 Be done with cruelty? The unalterable
 Shall I perform ignobly—steal away,
 With stealthy coward flight forsake her? No!
 She shall behold my suffering, my sore anguish,
 Hear the complaints of the departed soul,
 And weep tears o'er me. Oh! the human race
 Have steely souls—but she is as an angel.
 From the black deadly madness of despair
 Will she redeem my soul, and in soft words
 Of comfort, plaining, loose this pang of death!

OCTAVIO.

Thou wilt not tear thyself away; thou canst not.
 O, come, my son! I bid thee save thy virtue.

MAX.

Squander not thou thy words in vain.
 The heart I follow, for I dare trust to it.

OCTAVIO (*trembling, and losing all self-command*).
 Max.! Max.! if that most damned thing could be,
 If thou—my son—my own blood—(dare I *think* it?)
 Do sell thyself to him, the infamous,
 Do stamp this brand upon our noble house,
 Then shall the world behold the horrible deed
 And in unnatural combat shall the steel
 Of the son trickle with the father's blood.

MAX.

O hadst thou always better thought of men,
 Thou hadst then acted better. Curst suspicion!
 Unholy miserable doubt! To him
 Nothing on earth remains unwrench'd and firm,
 Who has no faith.

OCTAVIO.

And if I trust thy heart,
Will it be always in thy power to follow it?

MAX.

The heart's voice *thou* hast not o'erpowered—as little
Will Wallenstein be able to o'erpower it.

OCTAVIO.

O, Max.! I see thee never more again!

MAX.

Unworthy of thee wilt thou never see me.

OCTAVIO.

I go to Frauenberg—the Pappenheimers
I leave thee here, the Lothrings too; Tsokana
And Tiefenbach remain here to protect thee.
They love thee, and are faithful to their oath,
And will far rather fall in gallant contest
Than leave their rightful leader, and their honour.

MAX.

Rely on this, I either leave my life
In the struggle, or conduct them out of Pilsen.

OCTAVIO.

Farewell, my son!

MAX.

Farewell!

OCTAVIO.

How! not one look
Of filial love? No grasp of the hand at parting?
It is a bloody war to which we are going,
And the event uncertain and in darkness.
So used we not to part—it was not so!
Is it then true? I have a son no longer?

[MAX. falls into his arms, they hold each other for a long time in a speechless embrace, then go away at different sides.

(*The Curtain drops.*)

ACT III.

SCENE I.

A Chamber in the House of the Duchess of Friedland.

COUNTESS TERZKY, THEKLA, LADY NEUBRUNN (*the two latter sit at the same table at work*).

COUNTESS (*watching them from the opposite side*).
So you have nothing to ask me—nothing?
I have been waiting for a word from you.
And could you then endure in all this time
Not once to speak his name?

[THEKLA *remaining silent, the Countess rises and advances to her.*

Why, how comes this!
Perhaps I am already grown superfluous,
And other ways exist, besides through me?
Confess it to me, Thekla: have you seen him?

THEKLA.

To-day and yesterday I have not seen him.

COUNTESS.

And not heard from him, either? Come, be open.

THEKLA.

No syllable.

COUNTESS.

And still you are so calm?

THEKLA.

I am.

COUNTESS.

May't please you, leave us, Lady Neubunn.

[*Exit LADY NEUBRUNN.*

SCENE II.

The Countess, Thekla.

COUNTESS.

It does not please me, Princess, that he holds
Himself so *still*, exactly at *this* time.

THEKLA.

Exactly at *this* time?

COUNTESS.

He now knows all :
'Twere now the moment to declare himself.

THEKLA.

If I'm to understand you, speak less darkly.

COUNTESS.

'Twas for that purpose that I bade her leave us.
Thekla, you are no more a child. Your heart
Is now no more in nonage : for you love,
And boldness dwells with love—that *you* have proved.
Your nature moulds itself upon your father's
More than your mother's spirit. Therefore may you
Hear, what were too much for her fortitude.

THEKLA.

Enough : no further preface, I entreat you.
At once, out with it ! Be it what it may,
It is not possible that it should torture me
More than this introduction. What have you
To say to me ? Tell me the whole, and briefly !

COUNTESS.

You'll not be frighten'd—

THEKLA.

Name it, I entreat you.

COUNTESS.

It lies within your power to do your father
A weighty service—

THEKLA.

Lies within *my* power ?

COUNTESS.

Max. Piccolomini loves you. You can link him
Indissolubly to your father.

THEKLA.

I ?

What need of me for that ? And is he not
Already link'd to him ?

COUNTESS.

He was.

THEKLA.

And wherefore
Should he not be so now—not be so always ?

COUNTESS.

He cleaves to the Emperor too.

THEKLA.

Not more than duty
And honour may demand of him.

COUNTESS.

We ask

Proofs of his love, and not proofs of his honour.
Duty and honour!

Those are ambiguous words with many meanings.
You should interpret them for him : his love
Should be the sole definor of his honour.

THEKLA.

How?

COUNTESS.

The Emperor or you must he renounce.

THEKLA.

He will accompany my father gladly
In his retirement. From himself you heard,
How much he wish'd to lay aside the sword.

COUNTESS.

He must *not* lay the sword aside, we mean;
He must unsheathe it in your father's cause.

THEKLA.

He'll spend with gladness and alacrity
His life, his heart's blood in my father's cause,
If shame or injury be intended him.

COUNTESS.

You will not understand me. Well, hear then :—
Your father has fallen off from the Emperor,
And is about to join the enemy
With the whole soldiery—

THEKLA.

Alas, my mother !

COUNTESS.

There needs a great example to draw on
The army after him. The Piccolomini
Possess the love and reverence of the troops ;
They govern all opinions, and wherever

They lead the way, none hesitate to follow.
The son secures the father to our interests—
You've much in your hands at this moment.

THEKLA.

Ah,

My miserable mother! what a death-stroke
Awaits thee!—No! she never will survive it.

COUNTESS.

She will accommodate her soul to that
Which is and must be. I do know your mother:
The far-off future weighs upon her heart
With torture of anxiety; but is it
Unalterably, actually present,
She soon resigns herself, and bears it calmly.

THEKLA.

O my foreboding bosom! Even now,
E'en now 'tis here, that icy hand of horror!
And my young hope lies shuddering in its grasp;
I knew it well—no sooner had I enter'd,
An heavy ominous presentiment
Reveal'd to me that spirits of death were hovering
Over my happy fortune. But why think I
First of myself? My mother! O my mother!

COUNTESS.

Calm yourself! Break not out in vain lamenting!
Preserve you for your father the firm friend,
And for yourself the lover, all will yet
Prove good and fortunate.

THEKLA.

Prove good! What good?
Must we not part?—part ne'er to meet again?

COUNTESS.

He parts not from you! He cannot part from you.

THEKLA.

Alas for his sore anguish! It will rend
His heart asunder.

COUNTESS.

If indeed he loves you,
His resolution will be speedily taken.

THEKLA.

His resolution will be speedily taken—
O do not doubt of that ! A resolution !
Does there remain one to be taken ?

COUNTESS.

Hush !

Collect yourself ! I hear your mother coming.

THEKLA.

How shall I bear to see her ?

COUNTESS.

Collect yourself.

SCENE III.

To them enter the DUCHESS.

DUCHESS (*to the COUNTESS*).

Who was here, sister ? I heard some one talking,
And passionately too.

COUNTESS.

Nay ! there was no one.

DUCHESS.

I am grown so timorous, every trifling noise
Scatters my spirits, and announces to me
The footstep of some messenger of evil.
And you can tell me, sister, what the event is ?
Will he agree to do the Empcror's pleasure,
And send the horse-regiments to the Cardinal ?
Tell me, has he dismiss'd Von Questenberg
With a favourable answer ?

COUNTESS.

No, he has not.

DUCHESS.

Alas ! then all is lost ! I see it coming,
The worst that can come ! Yes, they will depose him ;
The accursed business of the Regensburg diet
Will all be acted o'er again !

COUNTESS.

No ! never !

Make your heart easy, sister, as to that.

[THEKLA, in extreme agitation, throws herself upon her mother, and enfolds her in her arms, weeping.

DUCHESS.

Yes, my poor child !
Thou too hast lost a most affectionate godmother
In the Empress. O that stern unbending man !
In this unhappy marriage what have I
Not suffer'd, not endured ? For even as if
I had been link'd on to some wheel of fire
That restless, ceaseless, whirls impetuous onward,
I have pass'd a life of frights and horrors with him,
And ever to the brink of some abyss
With dizzy headlong violence he bears me.
Nay, do not weep, my child. Let not my sufferings
Presignify unhappiness to thee,
Nor blacken with their shade the fate that waits thee.
There lives no second Friedland : thou, my child,
Hast not to fear thy mother's destiny.

THEKLA.

O let us supplicate him, dearest mother !
Quick ! quick ! here's no abiding place for us.
Here every coming hour broods into life
Some new affrightful monster.

DUCHESS.

Thou wilt share

An easier, calmer lot, my child ! We too,
I and thy father, witnessed happy days.
Still think I with delight of those first years,
When he was making progress with glad effort,
When his ambition was a genial fire,
Not that consuming flame which now it is.
The Emperor loved him, trusted him : and all
He undertook could not but be successful.
But since that ill-starr'd day at Regensburg,
Which plunged him headlong from his dignity,
A gloomy uncompanionable spirit,
Unsteady and suspicious, has possess'd him.
His quiet mind forsook him, and no longer
Did he yield up himself in joy and faith
To his old luck, and individual power ;
But thenceforth turn'd his heart and best affections
All to those cloudy sciences, which never
Have yet made happy him who follow'd them.

COUNTESS.

You see it, sister ! as your eyes permit you.
 But surely this is not the conversation
 To pass the time in which we are waiting for him.
 You know he will be soon here. Would you have him
 Find *her* in this condition ?

DUCHESS.

'Come, my child !
 Come wipe away thy tears, and show thy father
 A cheerful countenance. See, the tie-knot here
 Is off—this hair must not hang so dishevell'd.
 Come, dearest ! dry thy tears up. They deform
 Thy gentle eye.—Well now—what was I saying ?
 Yes, in good truth, this Piccolomini
 Is a most noble and deserving gentleman.

COUNTESS.

That is he, sister !

THEKLA (*to the Countess, with marks of great oppression of spirits*).

Aunt, you will excuse me ? (*Is going*).

COUNTESS.

But whither ? See, your father comes.

THEKLA.

I cannot see him now.

COUNTESS.

Nay, but bethink you.

THEKLA.

Believe me, I cannot sustain his presence.

COUNTESS.

But he will miss you, will ask after you.

DUCHESS.

What now ? Why is she going ?

COUNTESS.

She's not well.

DUCHESS (*anxiously*).

What ails then my beloved child ?

[Both follow the PRINCESS, and endeavour to detain her. During this WALLENSTEIN appears, engaged in conversation with ILLO.

SCENE IV.

WALLENSTEIN, ILLO, COUNTESS, DUCHESS, THEKLA.

WALLENSTEIN.

All quiet in the camp?

ILLO.

It is all quiet.

WALLENSTEIN.

In a few hours may couriers come from Prague
 With tidings, that this capital is ours.
 Then we may drop the mask, and to the troops
 Assembled in this town make known the measure
 And its result together. In such cases
 Example does the whole. Whoever is foremost
 Still leads the herd. An imitative creature
 Is man. The troops at Prague conceive no other,
 Than that the Pilsen army has gone through
 The forms of homage to us; and in Pilsen
 They shall swear fealty to us, because
 The example has been given them by Prague.
 Butler, you tell me, has declared himself?

ILLO.

At his own bidding, unsolicited,
 He came to offer you himself and regiment.

WALLENSTEIN.

I find we must not give implicit credence
 To every warning voice that makes itself
 Be listeñ'd to in the heart. To hold us back,
 Oft does the lying Spirit counterfeit
 The voice of Truth and inward Revelation,
 Scattering false oracles. And thus have I
 To intreat forgiveness, for that secretly
 I've wrong'd this honourable gallant man,
 This Butler: for a feeling, of the which
 I am not master (*fear* I would not call it).
 Creeps o'er me instantly, with sense of shuddering,
 At his approach, and stops love's joyous motion.
 And this same man, against whom I am warn'd,
 This honest man is he, who reaches to me
 The first pledge of my fortune.

ILLO.

And doubt not
That his example will win over to you
The best men in the army.

WALLENSTEIN.

Go and send
Isolani hither. Send him immediately.
He is under recent obligations to me:
With him will I commence the trial. Go. [Exit ILLO.]

WALLENSTEIN (*turns himself round to the females*).
Lo, there the mother with the darling daughter
For once we'll have an interval of rest—
Come! my heart yearns to live a cloudless hour
In the beloved circle of my family.

COUNTESS.

'Tis long since we've been thus together, brother.

WALLENSTEIN (*to the COUNTESS aside*).
Can she sustain the news? Is she prepared?

COUNTESS.

Not yet.

WALLENSTEIN.

Come here, my sweet girl! Seat thee by me,
For there is a good spirit on thy lips.
Thy mother praised to me thy ready skill;
She says a voice of melody dwells in thee,
Which doth enchant the soul. Now such a voice
Will drive away from me the evil demon
That beats his black wings close above my head.

DUCHESS.

Where is thy lute, my daughter? Let thy father
Hear some small trial of thy skill.

THEKLA.

My mother!

I—

DUCHESS.

Trembling? Come, collect thyself. Go, cheer
Thy father.

THEKLA.

O my mother! I—I cannot.

COUNTESS.

How, what is that, niece?

THEKLA (*to the Countess*).

O spare me—sing—now—in this sore anxiety,
Of the o'erburthen'd soul—to sing to *him*,
Who is thrusting, even now, my mother headlong
Into her grave.

DUCHESS.

How, Thekla! Humoursome!
What! shall thy father have express'd a wish
In vain?

COUNTESS.

Here is the lute.

THEKLA.

My God! how can I—
[*The orchestra plays. During the ritornello THEKLA expresses in her gestures and countenance the struggle of her feelings; and at the moment that she should begin to sing, contracts herself together, as one shuddering, throws the instrument down, and retires abruptly.*]

DUCHESS.

My child! O she is ill—

WALLENSTEIN.

What ails the maiden?

Say, is she often so?

COUNTESS.

Since then herself
Has now betray'd it, I too must no longer
Conceal it.

WALLENSTEIN.

What?

COUNTESS.

She loves him!

WALLENSTEIN.

Loves him! Whom?

COUNTESS.

Max. does she love! Max. Piccolomini.
Hast thou ne'er noticed it? Nor yet my sister?

DUCHESS.

Was it this that lay so heavy on her heart?
God's blessing on thee, my sweet child ! Thou need'st
Never take shame upon thee for thy choice.

COUNTESS.

This journey, if 'twere not thy aim, ascribe it
To thine own self. Thou shouldst have chosen another
To have attended her.

WALLENSTEIN.

• And does he know it ?

COUNTESS.

Yes, and he hopes to win her !

WALLENSTEIN.

Hopes to win her !

Is the boy mad ?

COUNTESS.

Well—hear it from themselves.

WALLENSTEIN.

He thinks to carry off Duke Friedland's daughter !
Ay ?—The thought pleases me.
The young man has no grovelling spirit.

COUNTESS.

Since

Such and such constant favour you have shown him—

WALLENSTEIN.

He chooses finally to be my heir.

And true it is, I love the youth ; yea, honour him.
But must he therefore be my daughter's husband ?
Is it daughters only ? Is it only children
That we must show our favour by ?

DUCHESS.

His noble disposition and his manners—

WALLENSTEIN.

Win him my heart, but not my daughter.

DUCHESS.

Then

His rank, his ancestors—

WALLENSTEIN.

Ancestors ! What ?

He is a subject, and my son-in-law
I will seek out upon the thrones of Europe.

DUCHESS.

O dearest Albrecht ! Climb we not too high
Lest we should fall too low.

WALLENSTEIN.

What ! have I paid
A price so heavy to ascend this eminence,
And jut out high above the common herd,
Only to close the mighty part I play
In Life's great drama, with a common kinsman ?
Have I for this—

[*Stops suddenly, repressing himself.*

She is the only thing
That will remain behind of me on earth ;
And I will see a crown around her head,
Or die in the attempt to place it there.
I hazard all—all ! and for this alone,
To lift her into greatness—

Yea, in this moment, in the which we are speaking—

[*He recollects himself.*

And I must now, like a soft-hearted father,
Couple together in good peasant-fashion
The pair, that chance to suit each other's liking—
And I must do it now, even now, when I
Am stretching out the wreath that is to twine
My full accomplish'd work—no ! she is the jewel,
Which I have treasured long, my last, my noblest,
And 'tis my purpose not to let her from me
For less than a king's sceptre.

DUCHESS.

O my husband !
You're ever building, building to the clouds,
Still building higher, and still higher building,
And ne'er reflect, that the poor narrow basis
Cannot sustain the giddy tottering column.

WALLENSTEIN (*to the COUNTESS*).

Have you announced the place of residence
Which I have destined for her ?

COUNTESS.

No ! not yet.
'Twere better you yourself disclosed it to her.

DUCHESS.

How? Do we not return to Carinthia then?

WALLENSTEIN.

No.

DUCHESS.

And to no other of your lands or seats?

WALLENSTEIN.

You would not be secure there.

DUCHESS.

Not secure

In the Emperor's realms, beneath the Emperor's
Protection?

WALLENSTEIN.

Friedland's wife may be permitted
No longer to hope *that*.

DUCHESS.

O God in heaven!

And have you brought it even to this!

WALLENSTEIN.

In Holland

You'll find protection.

DUCHESS.

In a Lutheran country?

What? And you send us into Lutheran countries?

WALLENSTEIN.

Duke Franz of Lauenburg conducts you thither

DUCHESS.

Duke Franz of Lauenburg?

The ally of Sweden, the Emperor's enemy.

WALLENSTEIN.

The Emperor's enemies are mine no longer.

DUCHESS (*casting a look of terror on the DUKE and the COUNTESS*).

Is it then true? It is. You are degraded?

Deposed from the command? O God in heaven!

COUNTESS (*aside to the DUKE*).

Leave her in this belief. Thou seest she cannot
Support the real truth.

SCENE V.

To them enter COUNT TERZKY.

COUNTESS.

—Terzky!

What ails him? What an image of affright!
He looks as he had seen a ghost.

TERZKY (*leading WALLENSTEIN aside*).
Is it thy command that all the Croats—

WALLENSTEIN.

Mine!

TERZKY.

We are betray'd.

WALLENSTEIN.

What?

TERZKY.

They are off! This night
The Jägers likewise—all the villages
In the whole round are empty.

WALLENSTEIN.

Isolani!

TERZKY.

Him thou hast sent away. Yes, surely.

WALLENSTEIN.

I?

TERZKY.

No! Hast thou not sent him off? Nor Deodati?
They are vanish'd both of them.

SCENE VI.

To them enter ILLO.

ILLO.

Has Terzky told thee?

TERZKY.

He knows all.

ILLO.

And likewise
That Esterhatzy, Goetz, Maradas, Kaunitz,
Kolalto, Palfi, have forsaken thee.

TERZKY.

Damnation!

WALLENSTEIN (*winks at them*).

Hush!

COUNTESS (*who has been watching them anxiously from the distance and now advances to them*).

Terzky! Heaven! What is it? What has happen'd?

WALLENSTEIN (*scarcely suppressing his emotions*).

Nothing! let us be gone!

TERZKY (*following him*).

Theresa, it is nothing.

COUNTESS (*holding him back*).

Nothing? Do I not see that all the life-blood
Has left your cheeks—look you not like a ghost?
That even my brother but affects a calmness?

PAGE (*enters*).

An Aide-de-Camp inquires for the Count Terzky.

[TERZKY follows the PAGE

WALLENSTEIN.

Go, hear his business.

[To ILLO.

This could not have happen'd

So unsuspected without mutiny.

Who was on guard at the gates?

ILLO.

Twas Tiefenbach.

WALLENSTEIN.

Let Tiefenbach leave guard without delay,
And Terzky's grenadiers relieve him.

ILLO (*is going*).

Stop!

Hast thou heard aught of Butler?

ILLO.

Him I met:

He will be here himself immediately.

Butler remains unshaken.

[ILLO exit. WALLENSTEIN is following him.

COUNTESS.

Let him not leave thee, sister! go, detain him!

There's some misfortune.

DUCHESS (*clinging to him*).

Gracious Heaven! What is it?

WALLENSTEIN.

Be tranquil ! leave me, sister ! dearest wife !
 We are in camp, and this is nought unusual ;
 Here storm and sunshine follow one another
 With rapid interchanges. These fierce spirits
 Champ the curb angrily, and never yet
 Did quiet bless the temples of the leader.
 If I am to stay, go you. The plaints of women
 Ill suit the scene where men must act.

[He is going : TERZKY returns.

TERZKY.

Remain here. From this window must we see it.

WALLENSTEIN (*to the Countess*).

Sister, retire !

COUNTESS.

No—never.

WALLENSTEIN.

"Tis my will.

TERZKY (*leads the Countess aside, and drawing her attention to the Duchess*).

Teresa !

DUCHESS.

Sister, come ! since he commands it.

SCENE VII.

WALLENSTEIN, TERZKY.

WALLENSTEIN (*stepping to the window*).

What now, then ?

TERZKY.

There are strange movements among all the troops,
 And no one knows the cause. Mysteriously,
 With gloomy silentness, the several corps
 Marshal themselves, each under its own banners.
 Tiefenbach's corps make threatening movements ; only
 The Pappenheimers still remain aloof
 In their own quarters, and let no one enter.

WALLENSTEIN.

Does Piccolomini appear among them ?

TERZKY.

We are seeking him : he is nowhere to be met with.

WALLENSTEIN.

What did the Aide-de-Camp deliver to you?

TERZKY.

My regiments had despatch'd him; yet once more
They swear fidelity to thee, and wait
The shout for onset, all prepared, and eager.

WALLENSTEIN.

But whence arose this larum in the camp?
It should have been kept secret from the army,
Till fortune had decided for us at Prague.

TERZKY.

O that thou hadst believed me! Yester evening
Did we conjure thee not to let that skulker,
That fox, Octavio, pass the gates of Pilzen.
Thou gavest him thy own horses to flee from thee.

WALLENSTEIN.

The old tune still! Now, once for all, no more
Of this suspicion—it is doting folly.

TERZKY.

Thou didst confide in Isolani too;
And lo! he was the first that did desert thee.

WALLENSTEIN.

It was but yesterday I rescued him
From abject wretchedness. Let that go by;
I never reckon'd yet on gratitude.
And wherein doth he wrong in going from me?
He follows still the god whom all his life
He has worshipp'd at the gaining-table. With
My fortune, and my seeming destiny,
He made the bond, and broke it not with me.
I am but the ship in which his hopes were stow'd,
And with the which, well-pleased and confident,
He traversed the open sea; now he beholds it
In eminent jeopardy among the coast-rocks,
And hurries to preserve his wares. As light
As the free bird from the hospitable twig
Where it had nested, he flies off from me:
No human tie is snapp'd betwixt us two.
Yea, he deserves to find himself deceived
Who seeks a heart in the unthinking man.

Like shadows on a stream, the forms of life
Impress their characters on the smooth forehead,
Nought sinks into the bosom's silent depth :
Quick sensibility of pain and pleasure
Moves the light fluids lightly ; but no soul
Warmeth the inner frame.

TERZKY.

Yet, would I rather
Trust the smooth brow than that deep furrow'd one.

SCENE VIII.

WALLENSTEIN, TERZKY, ILLO.

ILLO (*who enters agitated with rage*).
Treason and mutiny !

TERZKY.

And what further now ?

ILLO.

Tiefenbach's soldiers, when I gave the orders,
To go off guard—Mutinous villains !

TERZKY.

Well !

WALLENSTEIN.

What followed ?

ILLO.

They refused obedience to them.

TERZKY.

Fire on them instantly ! Give out the order.

WALLENSTEIN.

Gently ! what cause did they assign ?

ILLO.

No other,

They said, had right to issue orders but
Lieutenant-General *Piccolomini*.

WALLENSTEIN (*in a convulsion of agony*).

What ? How is that ?

ILLO.

He takes that office on him by commission,
Under sign-manual of the Emperor.

TERZKY.

From the Emperor—hear'st thou, Duke ?

ILLO.

The Generals made that stealthy flight—

TERZKY.

At his incitement

Duke! hear'st thou?

ILLO.

Caraffa too, and Montecuculi,
Are missing, with six other Generals, . . .
All whom he had induced to follow him.
This plot he has long had in writing by him
From the Emperor; but 'twas finally concluded,
With all the detail of the operation,
Some days ago with the Envoy Questenberg.

[WALLENSTEIN sinks down into a chair, and covers his face.

TERZKY.

O hadst thou but believed me!

SCENE IX.

To them enter the Countess.

COUNTESS.

This suspense,
This horrid fear—I can no longer bear it.
For heaven's sake tell me what has taken place?

ILLO.

The regiments are all falling off from us.

TERZKY.

Octavio Piccolomini is a traitor.

COUNTESS.

O my foreboding!

[Rushes out of the room.

TERZKY.

Hadst thou but believed me!
Now seest thou how the stars have lied to thee.

WALLENSTEIN.

The stars lie not; but we have here a work
Wrought counter to the stars and destiny.
The science is still honest: this false heart
Forces a lie on the truth-telling heaven.
On a divine law divination rests;
Where nature deviates from that law, and stumbles

Out of her limits, there all science errs.
 True I did not suspect! Were it superstition
 Never by such suspicion t' have affronted
 The human form, O may that time ne'er come
 In which I shame me of the infirmity.
 The wildest savage drinks not with the victim,
 Into whose breast he means to plunge the sword.
 This, this, Octavio, was no hero's deed:
 'Twas not thy prudence that did conquer mine;
 A bad heart triumph'd o'er an honest one.
 No shield received the assassin stroke; thou plungest
 Thy weapon on an unprotected breast—
 Against such weapons I am but a child.

SCENE X.

*To these enter BUTLER.**TERZKY (meeting him).*

O look there! Butler! Here we've still a friend!

WALLENSTEIN (*meets him with outspread arms, and embraces him with warmth*).

Come to my heart, old comrade! Not the sun
 Looks out upon us more revivingly
 In the earliest month of spring,
 Than a friend's countenance in such an hour.

BUTLER.

My General: I come—

WALLENSTEIN (*leaning on BUTLER'S shoulder*).

Know'st thou already?

That old man has betray'd me to the Emperor.
 What say'st thou? Thirty years have we together
 Lived out, and held out, sharing joy and hardship.
 We have slept in one camp-bed, drunk from one glass,
 One morsel shared! I leau'd myself on *him*,
 As now I lean me on *thy* faithful shoulder.
 And now in the very moment, when, all love,
 All confidence, my bosom beat to his,
 He sees and takes the advantage, stabs the knife
 Slowly into my heart.

[He hides his face on BUTLER'S breast.

BUTLER.

Forget the false one.

What is your present purpose?

WALLENSTEIN.

Well remember'd!

Courage, my soul! I am still rich in friends,
Still loved by Destiny; for in the moment
That it unmasks the plotting hypocrite,
It sends and proves to me one faithful heart.
Of the hypocrite no more! Think not, his loss
Was that which struck the pang: O no! his treason
Is that which strikes this pang! No more of him!
Dear to my heart, and honour'd were they both,
And the young man—yes—he did truly love me,
He—he—has not deceived me. But enough,
Enough of this—swift counsel now beseems us.
The Courier, whom Count Kinsky sent from Prague,
I expect him every moment: and whatever
He may bring with him, we must take good care
To keep it from the mutineers. Quick then!
Despatch some messenger you can rely on
To meet him, and conduct him to me.

[ILLO is going.

BUTLER (*detaining him*).

My General, whom expect you then?

WALLENSTEIN.

The Courier

Who brings me word of the event at Prague.

BUTLER (*hesitating*).

Hem!

WALLENSTEIN.

And what now?

BUTLER.

You do not know it?

WALLENSTEIN.

Well?

BUTLER.

From what that larum in the camp arose?

WALLENSTEIN.

From what?

BUTLER.

That Courier—

WALLENSTEIN (*with eager expectation*).

Well?

BUTLER.

Is already here.

TERZKY and ILLO (*at the same time*).

Already here!

WALLENSTEIN.

My Courier?

BUTLER.

For some hours.

WALLENSTEIN.

And I not know it?

BUTLER.

The sentinels detain him

In custody.

ILLO (*stampings with his foot*).

Damnation!

BUTLER.

And his letter

Was broken open, and is circulated

Through the whole camp.

WALLENSTEIN,

You know what it contains?

BUTLER.

Question me not!

TERZKY.

Illo! alas for us.

WALLENSTEIN.

Hide nothing from me—I can hear the worst.

Prague then is lost. It is. Confess it freely.

BUTLER.

Yes! Prague is lost. And all the several regiments

At Budweiss, Tabor, Braunau, Königingratz,

At Brunn and Znaym, have forsaken you,

And ta'en the oaths of fealty anew

To the Emperor. Yourself, with Kinsky, Terzky,

And Illo have been sentenced.

[TERZKY and ILLO express alarm and fury. WALLENSTEIN remains firm and collected.

WALLENSTEIN.

'Tis decided !

'Tis well ! I have received a sudden cure
 From all the pangs of doubt : with steady stream
 Once more my life-blood flows ! My soul's secure !
 In the night only Friedland's stars can beam.
 Lingering irresolute, with fitful fears
 I drew the sword—'twas with an inward strife,
 While yet the choice was mine. The murderous knife
 Is lifted for my heart ! Doubt disappears !
 I fight now for my head and for my life.

[Exit WALLENSTEIN ; the others follow him.

SCENE XI.

COUNTESS TERZKY (*enters from a side room*).

I can endure no longer. No !

[*Looks around her.*

Where are they !

No one is here. They leave me all alone,
 Alone in this sore anguish of suspense.
 And I must wear the outward show of calmness
 Before my sister, and shut in within me
 The pangs and agonies of my crowded bosom.
 It is not to be borne. If all should fail ;
 If—if he must go over to the Swedes,
 An empty-handed fugitive, and not
 As an ally, a covenanted equal,
 A proud commander with his army following ;
 If we must wander on from land to land,
 Like the Count Palatine, of fallen greatness
 An ignominious monument. But no !
 That day I will not see ! And could himself
 Endure to sink so low, I would not bear
 To see him so low sunken.

SCENE XII.

COUNTESS, DUCHESS, THEKLA.

THEKLA (*endeavouring to hold back the DUCHESS*)
 Dear mother, do stay here !

DUCHESS.

No ! Here is yet
 Some frightful mystery that is hidden from me.

Why does my sister shun me? Don't I see her
 Full of suspense and anguish roam about
 From room to room? Art thou not full of terror?
 And what import these silent nods and gestures
 Which stealthwise thou exchangest with her?

THEKLA.

Nothing:

Nothing, dear mother!

DUCHESS (*to the Countess*).

Sister, I will know.

COUNTESS.

What boots it now to hide it from her? Sooner
 Or later she *must* learn to hear and bear it.
 'Tis not the time now to indulge infirmity;
 Courage beseems us now, a heart collect,
 And exercise and previous discipline
 Of fortitude. One word, and over with it!
 Sister, you are deluded. You believe
 The Duke has been deposed—the Duke is not
 Deposed—he is—

THEKLA (*going to the Countess*).

What? do you wish to kill her?

COUNTESS.

The Duke is—

THEKLA (*throwing her arms round her mother*).

O stand firm! stand firm, my mother!

COUNTESS.

Revolted is the Duke; he is preparing
 To join the enemy; the army leave him,
 And all has fail'd.

SCENE XIII.

*A spacious Room in the Duke of Friedland's Palace.*WALLENSTEIN (*in armour*).

Thou hast gain'd thy point, Octavio! Once more am I
 Almost as friendless as at Regensburg.
 There I had nothing left me, but myself;
 But what one man can do, you have now experience.
 'The twigs have you hew'd off, and here I stand
 A leafless trunk. But in the sap within

Lives the creating power, and a new world
May sprout forth from it. Once already have I
Proved myself worth an army to you—I alone!
Before the Swedish strength your troops had melted;
Beside the Lech sank Tilly your last hope;
Into Bavaria, like a winter torrent,
Did that Gustavus pour, and at Vienna
In his own palace did the Emperor tremble.
Soldiers were scarce, for still the multitude
Follow the luck: all eyes were turn'd on me,
Their helper in distress: the Emperor's pride
Bow'd itself down before the man he had injured.
'Twas I must rise, and with creative word
Assemble forces in the desolate camps.
I did it. Like a god of war, my name
Went through the world. The drum was beat; and, lo!
The plough, the workshop is forsaken, all
Swarm to the old familiar long-loved banners;
And as the wood-choir rich in melody
Assemble quick around the bird of wonder,
When first his throat swells with his magic song,
So did the warlike youth of Germany
 Crowd in around the image of my eagle.
I feel myself the being that I was.
It is the soul that builds itself a body,
And Friedland's camp will not remain unfill'd.
Lead then your thousands out to meet me—true!
They are accustom'd under me to conquer,
But not against me. If the head and limbs
Separate from each other, 'twill be soon
Made manifest, in which the soul abode.

(*ILLO and TERZKY enter.*)

Courage, friends! courage! we are still unvanquish'd
I feel my footing firm; five regiments, Terzky,
Are still our own, and Butler's gallant troops;
And an host of sixteen thousand Swedes to-morrow.
I was not stronger when, nine years ago,
I marched forth, with glad heart and high of hope,
To conquer Germany for the Emperor.

SCENE XIV.

WALLENSTEIN, ILLO, TERZKY.

(To them enter NEUMANN, who leads TERZKY aside, and talks with him.)

TERZKY.

What do they want?

WALLENSTEIN.

What now?

TERZKY.

Ten Cuirassiers
 From Pappenheim request leave to address you
 In the name of the regiment.

WALLENSTEIN (*hastily to NEUMANN*).

Let them enter.

[Exit NEUMANN.

This

May end in something. Mark you. They are still
 Doubtful, and may be won

SCENE XV.

WALLENSTEIN, TERZKY, ILLO, ten Cuirassiers (*led by an ANSPESSADE**, *march up and arrange themselves, after the word of command, in one front before the Duke, and make their obeisance. He takes his hat off, and immediately covers himself again*).

ANSPESSADE.

Halt! Front! Present!

WALLENSTEIN (*after he has run through them with his eye, to the ANSPESSADE*).I know thee well. Thou art out of Brüggen in Flanders:
 Thy name is Mercy

ANSPESSADE.

Henry Mercy.

WALLENSTEIN.

Thou wert cut off on the march, surrounded by the Hessians, and didst fight thy way with an hundred and eighty men through their thousand.

* Anspessade, in German Gefreiter, a soldier inferior to a corporal, but above the sentinels. The German name implies that he is exempt from mounting guard.

ANSPESSADE.

"Twas even so, General !

WALLENSTEIN.

What reward hadst thou for this gallant exploit ?

ANSPESSADE.

That which I asked for : the honour to serve in this corps.

WALLENSTEIN (*turning to a second*).

~~They~~ wert among the volunteers that scized and made
booty of the Swedish battery at Altenburg.

SECOND CUIRASSIER.

Yes, General !

WALLENSTEIN.

I forget no one with whom I have exchanged words. (A
pause.) Who sends you ?

ANSPESSADE.

Your noble regiment, the Cuirassiers of Piccolomini.

WALLENSTEIN.

Why does not your colonel deliver in your request, accord-
ing to the custom of service ?

ANSPESSADE.

Because we would first know *whom* we serve.

WALLENSTEIN.

Begin your address.

ANSPESSADE (*giving the word of command*).

Shoulder your arms !

WALLENSTEIN (*turning to a third*).

Thy name is Risbeck ; Cologne is thy birth-place.

THIRD CUIRASSIER.

Risbeck of Cologne.

WALLENSTEIN.

It was thou that broughtest in the Swedish colonel, Dü-
bald, prisoner, in the camp at Nüremberg.

THIRD CUIRASSIER.

It was not I, General.

WALLENSTEIN

Perfectly right ! It was thy elder brother : thou hadst a
younger brother too : Where did he stay ?

THIRD CUIRASSIER.

He is stationed at Olmütz, with the Imperial army.

WALLENSTEIN (*to the ANSPESSEADE*).

Now then—begin.

ANSPESSEADE.

There came to hand a letter from the Emperor
Commanding us—

WALLENSTEIN (*interrupting him*).

Who chose you?

ANSPESSEADE.

Drew its own man by lot. Every company

WALLENSTEIN.

Now! to the business.

ANSPESSEADE.

There came to hand a letter from the Emperor
Commanding us collectively, from thee
All duties of obedience to withdraw,
Because thou wert an enemy and traitor.

WALLENSTEIN.

And what did you determine?

ANSPESSEADE.

All our comrades
At Braunau, Budweiss, Prague and Olmütz, have
Obey'd already; and the regiments here,
Tiefenbach and Toscano, instantly
Did follow their example. But—but we
Do not believe that thou art an enemy
And traitor to thy country, hold it merely
For lie and trick, and a trumped up Spanish story!

[*With warmth.*

Thyself shalt tell us what thy purpose is,
For we have found thee still sincere and true:
No mouth shall interpose itself betwixt
The gallant General and the gallant troops.

WALLENSTEIN.

Threin I recognise my Pappenheimers.

ANSPESSEADE.

And this proposal makes thy regiment to thee:
Is it thy purpose merely to preserve
In thine own hands this military sceptre,
Which so becomes thee, which the Emperor
Made over to thee by a covenant!

Is it thy purpose merely to remain
 Supreme commander of the Austrian armies?—
 We will stand by thee, General! and guarantee
 Thy honest rights against all opposition.
 And should it chance, that all the other regiments
 Turn from thee, by ourselves will we stand forth
 Thy faithful soldiers, and, as is our duty,
 Far rather let ourselves be cut to pieces,
 Than suffer thee to fall. But if it be
 As the Emperor's letter says, if it be true,
 That thou in traitorous wise wilt lead us over
 To the enemy, which God in heaven forbid!
 Then we too will forsake thee, and obey
 That letter—

WALLENSTEIN.

Hear me, children!

ANSPESSADE.

Yes, or no!

There needs no other answer.

WALLENSTEIN

Yield attention.

You're men of sense, examine for yourselves;
 Ye think, and do not follow with the herd:
 And therefore have I always shown you honour
 Above all others, suffer'd you to reason;
 Have treated you as free men, and my orders
 Were but the echoes of your prior suffrage.—

ANSPESSADE.

Most fair and noble has thy conduct been
 To us, my General! With thy confidence
 Thou hast honour'd us, and shown us grace and favour
 Beyond all other regiments; and thou seest
 We follow not the common herd. We will
 Stand by thee faithfully. Speak but one word—
 Thy word shall satisfy us, that it is not
 A treason which thou meditatest—that
 Thou meanest not to lead the army over
 To the enemy; nor e'er betray thy country.

WALLENSTEIN.

Me, me are they betraying. The Emperor
 Hath sacrificed me to my enemies,

And I must fall, unless my gallant troops
Will rescue me. See! I confide in you.
And be your hearts my stronghold! At this breast
The aim is taken, at this hoary head.
This is your Spanish gratitude, this is our
Requital for that murderous fight at Lutzen!
For this we threw the naked breast against
The halbert, made for this the frozen earth
Our bed, and the hard stone our pillow! never stream
Too rapid for us, nor wood too impervious;
With cheerful spirit we pursued that Mansfeldt
Through all the turns and windings of his flight:
Yea, our whole life was but one restless march:
And homeless, as the stirring wind, we travell'd
O'er the war-wasted earth. And now, even now,
That we have well nigh finish'd the hard toil,
The unthankful, the curse-laden toil of weapons,
With faithful indefatigable arm
Have roll'd the heavy war-load up the hill,
Behold! this boy of the Emperor's bears away
The honours of the peace, an easy prize!
He'll weave, forsooth, into his flaxen locks
The olive branch, the hard-earn'd ornament
Of this grey head, grown grey beneath the helmet.

ANSPESSADE.

That shall he not, while we can hinder it!
No one, but thou, who hast conducted it
With flane, shall end this war, this frightful war.
Thou ledd'st us out to the bloody field
Of death; thou and no other shalt conduct us home,
Rejoicing, to the lovely plains of peace—
Shalt share with us the fruits of the long toil—

WALLENSTEIN.

What! Think you then at length in late old age
To enjoy the fruits of toil? Believe it not.
Never, no never, will you see the end
Of the contest! you and me, and all of us,
This war will swallow up! War, war, not peace,
Is Austria's wish; and therefore, because I
Endeavour'd after peace, therefore I fall.
For what cares Austria, how long the war

Wears out the armies and lays waste the world !
 She will but wax and grow amid the ruin
 And still win new domains.

[*The Cuirassiers express agitation by their gestures.*

Ye're moved—I see

A noble rage flash from your eyes, ye warriors !
 Oh that my spirit might possess you now
 Daring as once it led you to the battle !
 Ye would stand by me with your veteran arms,
 Protect me in my rights ; and this is noble !
 But think not that *you* can accomplish it,
 Your scanty number ! to no purpose will you
 Have sacrificed you for your General. [*Confidentially.*]
 No ! let us tread securely, seek for friends ;
 The Swedes have proffer'd us assistance, let us
 Wear for a while the appearance of good will,
 And use them for your profit, till we both
 Carry the fate of Europe in our hands,
 And from our camp to the glad jubilant world
 Lead Peace forth with the garland on her head !

ANSPESSADE.

'Tis then but mere appearances which thou
 Dost put on with the Swede ! Thou'l not betray
 The Emperor ? Wilt not turn us into Swedes ?
 This is the only thing which we desire
 To learn from thee.

WALLENSTEIN.

What care I for the Swedes ?

I hate them as I hate the pit of hell,
 And under Providence I trust right soon
 To chase them to their homes across their Baltic.
 My cares are only for the whole : I have
 A heart—it bleeds within me for the miseries
 And piteous groaning of my fellow Germans.
 Ye are but common men, but yet ye think
 With minds not common ; ye appear to me
 Worthy before all others, that I whisper ye
 A little word or two in confidence !
 See now ! already for full fifteen years,
 The war-torch has continued burning, yet
 No rest, no pause of conflict. Swede and German,

Papist and Lutheran ! neither will give way
 To the other, every hand's against the other.
 Each one is party and no one a judge.
 Where shall this end ? Where's he that will unravel
 This tangle, ever tangling more and more.
 It must be cut asunder.
 I feel that I am the man of destiny,
 And trust, with your assistance, to accomplish it.

SCENE XVI.

*To these enter BUTLER.*BUTLER (*passionately*).

General ! This is not right !

WALLENSTEIN.

What is not right ?

BUTLER.

It must needs injure us with all honest men

WALLENSTEIN.

But what ?

BUTLER.

It is an open proclamation
 Of insurrection.

WALLENSTEIN.

Well, well—but what is it ?

BUTLER.

Count Terzky's regiments tear the Imperial Eagle
 From off the banners, and instead of it
 Have rear'd aloft their arms.ANSPESSADE (*abruptly to the Cuirassiers*).

Right about ! March !

WALLENSTEIN.

Cursed be this counsel, and accursed who gave it !

[*To the Cuirassiers, who are retiring.*Halt, children, halt ! There's some mistake in this ;
 Hark !—I will punish it severely. Stop !They do not hear. (*To ILLO*). Go after them, assure them,
 And bring them back to me, cost what it may.[*ILLO hurries out.*

This hurls us headlong. Butler ! Butler !

You are my evil genius, wherefore must you
 Announce it in their presence ? It was all

In a fair way. They were half won ! those madmen
 With their improvident over-readiness—
 A cruel game is Fortune playing with me.
 The zeal of friends it is that razes me,
 And not the hate of enemies.

SCENE XVII.

To these enter the DUCHESS, who rushes into the Chamber.
THEKLA and the COUNTESS follow her.

DUCHESS.

O Albrecht !

What hast thou done ?

WALLENSTEIN.

And now comes this beside.

COUNTESS.

. Forgive me, brother ! It was not in my power—
 They know all.

DUCHESS.

What hast thou done ?

COUNTESS (*to TERZKY*).

Is there no hope ? Is all lost utterly ?

TERZKY.

All lost. No hope. Prague in the Emperor's hands,
 The soldiery have ta'en their oaths anew.

COUNTESS.

That lurking hypocrite, Octavio !
 Count Max. is off too.

TERZKY.

Where can he be ? He's
 Gone over to the Emperor with his father.[*THEKLA rushes out into the arms of her mother, hiding
 her face in her bosom.*]DUCHESS (*enfolding her in her arms*).
 Unhappy child ! and more unhappy mother !WALLENSTEIN (*aside to TERZKY*).Quick ! Let a carriage stand in readiness
 In the court behind the palace. Scherfenberg
 Be their attendant ; he is faithful to us ;

To Egra he'll conduct them, and we follow.

[To ILLO, who returns.
Thou hast not brought them back ?

ILLO.

Hear'st thou the uproar ?

The whole corps of the Pappenheimers is
Drawn out : the younger Piccolomini,
Their colonel, they require¹ for they affirm,
That he is in the palace here, a prisoner ;
And if thou dost not instantly deliver him,
They will find means to free him with the sword.

[All stand amazed.

TERZKY.

What shall we make of this ?

WALLENSTEIN.

Said I not so ?

O my prophetic heart ! he is still here.
He has not betray'd me—he could not betray me.
I never doubted of it.

COUNTESS.

If he be

Still here, then all goes well ; for I know what

[Embracing THEKLA

Will keep him here for ever.

TERZKY.

It can't be.

His father has betray'd us, is gone over
To the Emperor—the son could not have ventured
To stay behind.

THEKLA (*her eye fixed on the door*).
There he is !

SCENE XVIII.

To these enter MAX. PICCOLOMINI.

MAX.

Yes ! here he is ! I can endure no longer
To creep on tiptoe round this house, and lurk
In ambush for a favourable moment :
This loitering, this suspense exceeds my powers.

[Advancing to THEKLA, who has thrown herself into her
mother's arms.

Turn not thine eyes away. O look upon me !
 Confess it freely before all. Fear no one.
 Let who will hear that we both love each other.
 Wherefore continue to conceal it ? Secrecy
 Is for the happy—misery, hopeless misery,
 Needeth no veil ! Beneath a thousand suns
 It dares act openly.

[He observes the Countess looking on Thekla with expressions of triumph.]

No, Lady ! No !
 Expect not, hope it not. I am not come
 To stay : to bid farewell, farewell for ever.
 For this I come ! 'Tis over ! I must leave thee !
 Thekla, I must—must leave thee ! Yet thy hatred
 Let me not take with me. I pray thee, grant me
 One look of sympathy, only one look.
 Say that thou dost not hate me. Say it to me Thekla !

[Grasps her hand.]

O God ! I cannot leave this spot—I cannot !
 Cannot let go this hand. O tell me, Thekla !
 That thou dost suffer with me, art convinced
 That I can not act otherwise.

[Thekla, avoiding his look, points with her hand to her father. Max. turns round to the Duke, whom he had not till then perceived.]

Thou here ? It was not thou, whom here I sought.
 I trusted never more to have beheld thee.
 My business is with her alone. Here will I
 Receive a full acquittal from this heart—
 For any other I am no more concern'd.

WALLENSTEIN.

Think'st thou that, fool-like, I shall let thee go,
 And act the mock-magnanimous with thee ?
 Thy father is become a villain to me ;
 I hold thee for his son, and nothing more :
 Nor to no purpose shalt thou have been given
 Into my power. Think not, that I will honour
 That ancient love, which so remorselessly
 He mangled. They are now past by, those hours
 Of friendship and forgiveness. Hate and vengeance

Succeed—'tis now their turn—I too can throw
 All feelings of the man aside—can prove
 Myself as much a monster as thy father!

MAX. (*calmly*).

Thou wilt proceed with me, as thou hast power.
 Thou know'st, I neither brave nor fear thy rage.
 What has detain'd me here, that too thou know'st.

* [Taking THEKLA by the hand.

See, Duke! All—all would I have owed to thee,
 Would have received from thy paternal hand
 The lot of blessed spirits. This hast thou
 Laid waste for ever—that concerns not thee.
 Indifferent thou tramplest in the dust
 Their happiness, who most are thine. The god
 Whom thou dost serve, is no benignant deity.
 Like as the blind irreconcileable
 Fierce element, incapable of compact,
 Thy heart's wild impulse only dost thou follow*.

* I have here ventured to omit a considerable number of lines. I fear that I should not have done amiss, had I taken this liberty more frequently. It is, however, incumbent on me to give the original, with a literal translation.

Weh denen, die auf Dich vertraun, an Dich
 Die sichre Hütte ihres Glückes lehnen,
 Gelockt von deiner geistlichen Gestalt:
 Schnell unverhofft, bei nächtlich stiller Weile
 Gührts in dem tückschen Feuerschlunde, ladet
 Sich aus mit tobender Gewalt, und weg
 Treibt über alle Pflanzungen der Menschen
 Der wilde Strom in grausender Zerstörung.

WALLENSTEIN.

Du schilderst deines Vaters Herz. Wie Du's
 Beschreibst, so ist's in seinem Eingeweide,
 In dieser schwarzen Heuchlers Brust gestaltet.
 O, mich hat Höllenkunst getäuscht! Mir sandte
 Der Abgrund den verflecktesten der Geister,
 Den Lügenkundigsten herauf, und stellt' ihn
 Als Freund an meiner Seite. Wer vermag
 Der Hölle Macht zu widerstehn! Ich zog
 Den Basiliken auf an meinem Busen,
 Mit meinem Herzblut nährt ich ihn, er sog
 Sich schwelgend voll an meiner Liebe Brüsten,
 Ich hatte nimmer Arges gegen ihn,
 Weit offen liess ich des Gedankens Thore,

WALLENSTEIN.

Thou art describing thy own father's heart.
 The adder ! O, the carhms of hell o'erpowered me.
 He dwelt within me, to my inmost soul
 Still to and fro he pass'd, suspected never
 On the wide ocean, in the starry heaven
 Did mine eyes seek the enemy, whom I
 In my heart's heart had folded ! Had I been
 To *Ferdinand* what Octavio was to *me*,
 War had I ne'er denounced against him. No,
 I never could have done it. The Emperor was
 My austere master only, not my friend.
 There was already war 'twixt him and me
 When he deliver'd the Commander's Staff
 Into my hands ; for there's a natural
 Unceasing war 'twixt cunning and suspicion ;
 Peace exists only betwixt confidence
 And faith. Who poisons confidence, he murders
 The future generations.

MAX.

I will not

Defend my father. Woe is me, I cannot !
 Hard deeds and luckless have ta'en place ; one crime
 Drags after it the other in close link.
 But we are innocent : how have we fallen

Und warf die Schlüssel weiser Vorsicht weg,
 Am Sternenhimmel, etc.

LITERAL TRANSLATION.

Alas ! for those who place their confidence on thee, against thee lean the secure hut of their fortune, allured by thy hospitable form. Suddenly, unexpectedly, in a moment still as night, there is a fermentation in the treacherous gulf of fire ; it discharges itself with raging force, and away over all the plantations of men drives the wild stream in frightful devastation.—WALLENSTEIN. Thou art portraying thy father's heart ; as thou describest, even so is it shaped in his entrails, in this black hypocrite's breast, O, the art of hell has deceived me ! The Abyss sent up to me the most spotted of the spirits, the most skilful in lies, and placed him as a friend by my side. Who may withstand the power of hell ? I took the basilisk to my bosom, with my heart's blood I nourished him ; he sucked himself glutfull at the breasts of my love. I never harboured evil towards him ; wide open did I leave the door of my thoughts ; I threw away the key of wise foresight. In the starry heaven, &c.—We find a difficulty in believing this to have been written by SCHILLER.

Into this circle of mishap and guilt ?
 To whom have we been faithless ? Wherefore must
 The evil deeds and guilt reciprocal
 Of our two fathers twine like serpents round us ?
 Why must our fathers'
 Unconquerable hate rend us asunder,
 Who love each other ?

WALLENSTEIN.

Max., remain with me.

Go you not from me, Max.! Hark ! I will tell thee—
 How when at Prague, our winter quarters, thou
 Wert brought into my tent a tender boy,
 Not yet accustom'd to the German winters ;
 Thy hand was frozen to the heavy colours ;
 Thou wouldest not let them go.—
 At that time did I take thee in my arms,
 And with my mantle did I cover thee ;
 I was thy nurse, no woman could have been
 A kinder to thee ; I was not ashamed
 To do for thee all little offices,
 However strange to me ; I tended thee
 Till life return'd ; and when thine eyes first open'd,
 I had thee in my arms. Since then, when have
 Alter'd my feelings towards thee ? Many thousands
 Have I made rich, presented them with lands ;
 Rewarded them with dignities and honours ;
 Thee have I loved : my heart, my self, I gave
 To thee ! They all were aliens : THOU wert
 Our child and inmate*. Max.! Thou canst not leave me ;
 It cannot be ; I may not, will not think
 That Max. can leave me.

MAX.

O my God !

WALLENSTEIN.

I have

* This is a poor and inadequate translation of the affectionate simplicity of the original—

Sie alle waren Fremdlinge, Du warst
 Das Kind des Hauses.

Indee the whole speech is in the best style of Massinger. O si sic
 omnia!

Held and sustain'd thee from thy tottering childhood.
 What holy bond is there of natural love,
 What human tie, that does not knit thee to me ?
 I love thee, Max. ! What did thy father for thee,
 Which I too have not done, to the height of duty ?
 Go hence, forsake me, serve thy Emperor ;
 He will reward thee with a pretty chain
 Of gold ; with his ram's fleece will he reward thee ;
 For that the friend, the father of thy youth,
 For that the holiest feeling of humanity,
 Was nothing worth to thee.

MAX.

O God ! how can I
 Do otherwise ? Am I not forced to do it,
 My oath—my duty—my honour—

WALLENSTEIN.

How ? Thy duty ?
 Duty to whom ? Who art thou ? Max. ! bethink thee
 What duties mayst *thou* have ? If *I* am acting
 A criminal part toward the Emperor,
 It is my crime, not thine. Dost thou belong
 To thine own self ? Art thou thine own commander ?
 Stand'st thou, like me, a freeman in the world,
 That in thy actions thou shouldst plead free agency ?
 On me thou'rt planted, I am thy Emperor ;
 To obey *me*, to *belong* to *me*, this is
 Thy honour, this a law of nature to thee !
 And if the planet, on the which thou livest
 And hast thy dwelling, from its orbit starts
 It is not in thy choice, whether or no
 Thou'l follow it. Unfelt it whirls thee onward
 Together with his ring, and all his moons.
 With little guilt stepp'st thou into this contest ;
 Thee will the world not censure, it will praise thee,
 For that thou held'st thy friend more worth to thee
 Than names and influences more remeved.
 For justice is the virtue of the ruler,
 Affection and fidelity the subject's.
 Not every one doth it beseem to question
 The far-off high Arcturus. Most securely

Wilt thou pursue the nearest duty : let
The pilot fix his eye upon the pole-star.

SCENE XIX.

To these enter NEUMANN.

WALLENSTEIN.

What now?

NEUMANN.

The Pappenheimers are dismounted,
And are advancing now on foot, determined
With sword in hand to storm the house, and free
The Count, their colonel.

WALLENSTEIN (*to TERZKY*).

Have the cannon planted.
I will receive them with chain-shot.

[*Exit TERZKY.*

Prescribe to me with sword in hand ! Go, Neumann !
"Tis my command that they retreat this moment,
And in their ranks in silence wait my pleasure.

[*NEUMANN exit. ILLO steps to the window.*

COUNTESS.

Let him go, I entreat thee, let him go.

ILLO (*at the window*).

Hell and perdition !

WALLENSTEIN.

What is it ?

ILLO.

They scale the council-house, the roof's uncovered,
They level at this house the cannon—

MAX.

Madmen !

ILLO.

They are making preparations now to fire on us.

DUCHESS and COUNTESS.

Merciful heaven !

MAX. (*to WALLENSTEIN*).

Let me go to them !

WALLENSTEIN.

Not a step !

MAX. (*pointing to THEKLA and the DUCHESS*).
 But their life ! Thine !

WALLENSTEIN.

What tidings bring'st thou, Terzky ?

SCENE XX.

To these TERZKY returning.

TERZKY.

Message and greeting from our faithful regiments.
 Their ardour may no longer be curb'd in.
 They entreat permission to commence the attack ;
 And if thou wouldest but give the word of onset,
 They could now charge the enemy in rear,
 Into the city wedge them, and with ease
 O'erpower them in the narrow streets.

ILLO.

O come !

Let not their ardour cool. The soldiery
 Of Butler's corps stand by us faithfully ;
 We are the greater number. Let us charge them,
 And finish here in Pilsen the revolt.

WALLENSTEIN.

What ? shall this town become a field of slaughter,
 And brother-killing Discord, fire-eyed,
 Be let loose through its streets to roam and rage ?
 Shall the decision be deliver'd over
 To deaf remorseless Rage, that hears no leader ?
 Here is not room for battle, only for butchery.
 Well, let it be ! I have long thought of it,
 So let it burst then !

[*Turns to MAX.*

Well, how is it with thee ?
 Wilt thou attempt a heat with me. Away !
 Thou art free to go. Oppose thyself to me,
 Front against front, and lead them to the battle ;
 Thou'rt skill'd in war, thou hast learn'd somewhat under me,
 I need not be ashamed of my opponent,
 And never hadst thou fairer opportunity
 To pay me for thy schooling.

COUNTESS.

Is it then,

Can it have come to this?—What! Cousin, cousin!
Have you the heart?

MAX.

The regiments that are trusted to my care
I have pledged my troth to bring away from Pilsen
True to the Emperor; and this promise will I
Make good, or perish. More than this no duty
Requires of me. I will not fight against thee,
Unless compell'd; for though an enemy,
Thy head is holy to me still.[*Two reports of cannon.* ILLO and TERZKY hurry to the
window.

WALLENSTEIN.

What's that?

TERZKY.

He falls.

WALLENSTEIN.

Falls! Who?

ILLO.

Tiefenbach's corps

Discharged the ordnance.

WALLENSTEIN.

Upon whom?

ILLO.

On Neumann

Your messenger.

WALLENSTEIN (*starting up*).

Ha! Death and hell! I will—

TERZKY

Expose thyself to their blind frenzy?

DUCHESS and COUNTESS.

No!

For God's sake, no!

ILLO.

Not yet, my General!

O hold him! hold him!

WALLENSTEIN.

Leave me——

MAX.

Do it not;

Not yet! This rash and bloody deed has thrown them
Into a frenzy-fit—allow them time—

WALLENSTEIN.

Away! too long already have I loiter'd.
They are emboldened to these outrages,
Beholding not my face. They shall behold
My countenance, shall hear my voice—
Are they not *my* troops? Am I not their General,
And their long-fear'd commander! Let me see,
Whether indeed they do no longer know
That countenance, which was their sun in battle!
From the balcony (mark!) I show myself
To these rebellious forces, and at once
Revolt is mounded, and the high-swoln current
Shrinks back into the old bed of obedience.

[*Exit* WALLENSTEIN; ILLO, TERZKY, and BUTLER
follow.

SCENE XXI.

COUNTESS, DUCHESS, MAX. and THEKLA.,

COUNTESS (*to the DUCHESS*).

Let them but see him—there is hope still, sister.

DUCHESS.

Hope! I have none!

MAX. (*who during the last scene has been standing at a distance, in a visible struggle of feelings, advances.*)

This can I not endure.

With most determined soul did I come hither;
My purposed action seem'd unblamable
To my own conscience—and I must stand here
Like one abhor'r'd, a hard inhuman being:
Yea, loaded with the curse of all I love!
Must see all whom I love in this sore anguish,
Whom I with one word can make happy—O!
My heart revolts within me, and two voices
Make themselves audible within my bosom.
My soul's benighted; I no longer can
Distinguish the right track. O, well and truly

Didst thou say, father, I relied too much
On my own heart. My mind moves to and fro—
I know not what to do.

COUNTESS.

What! you know not?
Does not your own heart tell you? O! then I
Will tell it you. Your father is a traitor,
A frightful traitor to us—he has plotted
Against our General's life; has plunged us all
In misery—and you're his son! 'Tis yours
To make the *amends*—Make you the son's fidelity
Outreigh the father's treason, that the name
Of Piccolomini be not a proverb
Of infamy, a common form of cursing
To the posterity of Wallenstein.

MAX.

Where is that voice of truth which I dare follow!
It speaks no longer in *my* heart. We all
But utter what our passionate wishes dictate:
O that an angel would descend from heaven,
And scoop for me the right, the uncorrupted,
With a pure hand from the pure Fount of Light.

[*His eyes glance on THEKLA.*

What other angel seek I? To this heart,
To this unerring heart, will I submit it;
Will ask thy love, which has the power to bless
The happy man alone, averted ever
From the disquieted and guilty—*canst* thou
Still love me, if I stay? Say that thou canst,
And I am the Duke's—

COUNTESS.

Think, niece—

MAX.

Think, nothing, Thekla!

Speak what thou *feelest*.

COUNTESS.

Think upon your father.

MAX.

I did not question thee, as Friedland's daughter.
Thee, the beloved and the unerring god
Within thy heart, I question. What's at stake?

Not whether diadem of royalty
 Be to be won or not—that mightst thou *think* on.
 Thy friend, and his soul's quiet, are at stake :
 The fortune of a thousand gallant men,
 Who will all follow me ; shall I forswear
 My oath and duty to the Emperor ?
 Say, shall I send into Octavio's camp
 The parricidal ball ? For when the ball
 Has left its cannon, and is off its flight,
 It is no longer a dead instrument !
 It lives, a spirit passes into it.
 The avenging furies seize possession of it,
 And with sure malice guide it the worst way.

THEKLA.

O ! Max.—

MAX. (*interrupting her*).

Nay, not precipitately either, Thekla.
 I understand thee. To thy noble heart
 The hardest duty might appear the highest.
 The human, not the great part, would I act
 Even from my childhood to this present hour,
 Think what the Duke has done for me, how loved me,
 And think, too, how my father has repaid him.
 O likewise the free lovely impulses
 Of hospitality, the pious friend's
 Faithful attachment, these, too, are a holy
 Religion to the heart ; and heavily
 The shudderings of nature do avenge
 Themselves on the barbarian that insults them.
 Lay all upon the balance, all—then speak,
 And let thy heart decide it.

THEKLA

O, thy own
 Hath long ago decided. Follow thou
 Thy heart's first feeling—

COUNTESS.

Oh ! ill-fated woman !

THEKLA.

Is it possible, that that can be the right,
 The which thy tender heart did not at first
 Detect and seize with instant impulse ? Go,

Fulfil thy duty ! I should ever love thee.
 Whate'er thou hadst chosen, thou wouldest still have acted
 Nobly and worthy of thee—but repentance
 Shall ne'er disturb thy soul's fair peace.

MAX.

Then I

Must leave thee, must part from thee ?

THEKLA.

'Being faithful

To thine own self, thou art faithful, too, to me :
 If our fates part, our hearts remain united.
 A bloody hatred will divide for ever
 The houses Piccolomini and Friedland ;
 But we belong not to our houses. Go !
 Quick ! quick ! and separate thy righteous cause
 From our unholy and unblessed one !
 The curse of Heaven lies upon our head :
 'Tis dedicate to ruin. Even me
 My father's guilt drags with it to perdition.
 Mourn not for me :
 My destiny will quickly be decided.

[MAX. clasps her in his arms in extreme emotion. There is heard from behind the Scene a loud, wild, long continued cry, Vivat Ferdinandus ! accompanied by war-like instruments. MAX. and THEKLA remain without motion in each other's embraces.

SCENE XXII.

*To the above enter TERZKY.*COUNTESS (*meeting him*).

What meant that cry ? What was it ?

TERZKY.

All is lost !

COUNTESS.

What ! they regarded not his countenance ?

TERZKY.

Twas all in vain.

DUCHESS.

They shouted Vivat !

TERZKY.

To the Emperor.

COUNTESS.

The traitors !

TERZKY.

Nay ! he was not permitted
 Even to address them. Soon as he began,
 With deafening noise of warlike instruments
 They drown'd his words. But here he comes.

SCENE XXIII.

To these enter WALLENSTEIN, accompanied by ILLO and BUTLER.

WALLENSTEIN (*as he enters*).

Terzky !

TERZKY.

My General !

WALLENSTEIN.

Let our regiments hold themselves
 In readiness to march ; for we shall leave
 Pilsen ere evening. [Exit TERZKY.]

Butler !

BUTLER

Yes, my General

WALLENSTEIN.

The Governor of Egra is your friend
 And countryman. Write to him instantly
 By a post courier. He must be advised,
 That we are with him early on the morrow.
 You follow us yourself, your regiment with you.

BUTLER.

It shall be done, my General !

WALLENSTEIN (*steps between MAX. and THEKLA, who have remained during this time in each other's arms*).

Part !

MAX.

O God !

[Cuirassiers enter with drawn swords, and assemble in the back-ground. At the same time there are heard from below some spirited passages out of the Pappenheim March, which seem to address MAX.]

WALLENSTEIN (to the Cuirassiers).
Here he is, he is at liberty : I keep him
No longer.

[He turns away, and stands so that MAX cannot pass by
him nor approach the PRINCESS.]

Thou know'st that I have not yet learnt to live
Without thee ! I go forth into a desert,
Leaving my all behind me. O do not turn
Thine eyes away from me ! O once more show me
Thy ever dear and honour'd countenance.

[MAX attempts to take his hand, but is repelled : he
turns to the COUNTESS.]
Is there no eye that has a look of pity for me ?

[The COUNTESS turns away from him ; he turns to the
DUCHESS.]

My mother !

DUCHESS.

Go where duty calls you. Happily
The time may come, when you may prove to us
A true friend, a good angel at the throne
Of the Emperor.

MAX.

You give me hope ; you would not
Suffer me wholly to despair. No ! no !
Mine is a certain misery. Thanks to Heaven !
That offers me a means of ending it.

[The military music begins again. The stage fills more
and more with armed men. MAX sees BUTLER and
addresses him.]

And you here, Colonel Butler—and will you
Not follow me ? Well, then ! remain more faithful
To your new lord, than you have proved yourself
To the Emperor. Come, Butler ! promise me,
Give me your hand upon it, that you'll be
The guardian of his life, its shield, its watchman.
He is attainted, and his princely head
Fair booty for each slave that trades in murder.
Now he doth need the faithful eye of friendship,
And those whom here I see—

[Casting suspicious looks on LILLO and BUTLER.]

THEO.

Go—seek for traitors
 In Gallas', in your father's quarters. Here
 Is only one. Away! away! and free us
 From his detested sight! . . . Away!

[MAX. attempts once more to approach THEKLA. WALLENSTEIN prevents him. MAX. stands irresolute, and in apparent anguish. In the mean time the stage fills more and more; and the horns sound from below louder and louder, and each time after a shorter interval.

MAX.

Blow, blow! O were it but the Swedish Trumpets,
 And all the naked swords, which I see here,
 Were plunged into my breast! What purpose you?
 You come to tear me from this place! Beware,
 Ye drive me not to desperation. Do it not!
 Ye may repent it!

[The stage is entirely filled with armed men.
 Yet more! weight upon weight to drag me down!
 Think what ye're doing. It is not well done
 To choose a man despairing for your leader;
 You tear me from my happiness. Well, then,
 I dedicate your souls to vengeance. Mark!
 For your own ruin you have chosen me:
 Who goes with me, must be prepared to perish.

[He turns to the background, their ensues a sudden and violent movement among the Cuirassiers; they surround him, and carry him off in wild tumult. WALLENSTEIN remains immovable. THEKLA sinks into her mother's arms. The curtain falls. The music becomes loud and overpowering, and passes into a complete war-march—the orchestra joins it—and continues during the interval between the second and third Act.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

The BURGOMASTER'S House at Egra.

BUTLER (just arrived).

Here then he is, by his destiny conducted.
 Here, Friedland! and no farther! From Bohemia,

Thy meteor rose, traversed the sky awhile,
And here upon the borders of Bohemia
Must sink.

Thou hast foresworn the ancient colours,
Blind man ! yet trustest to thy ancient fortunes.
Profaner of the altar and the hearth,
Against thy Emperer and fellow citizens
Thou mean'st to wage the war. Friedland, beware—
The evil spirit of revenge impels thee—
Beware thou, that revenge destroy thee not !

SCENE II.

BUTLER and GORDON.

GORDON.

Is it you ?
How my heart sinks ! The Duke a fugitive traitor !
His princely head attainted ! O my God !
[Tell me, General, I implore thee, tell me
In full, of all these sad events at Pilsen.]

BUTLER.

You have received the letter which I sent you
By a post-courier ?

GORDON.

Yes : and in obedience to it
Open'd the stronghold to him without scruple,
For an imperial letter orders me
To follow your commands implicitly.
But yet forgive me ! when even now I saw
The Duke himself, my scruples recommenced.
For truly, not like an attainted man,
Into this town did Friedland make his entrance ;
His wonted majesty beam'd from his brow,
And calm, as in the days when all was right,
Did he receive from me the accounts of office.
'Tis said, that fallen pride learns condescension :
But sparing and with dignity the Duke
Weigh'd every syllable of approbation,
As masters praise a servant who has done
His duty and no more.

BUTLER.

'Tis all precisely
 As I related in my letter. Friedland
 Has sold the army to the enemy,
 And pledged himself to give up Prague and Egra.
 On this report the regiments all forsook him,
 The five excepted that belong to Terzky,
 And which have follow'd him, as thou hast seen.
 The sentence of attainder is pass'd on him,
 And every loyal subject is required
 To give him in to justice, dead or living.

GORDON.

A traitor to the Emperor. Such a noble !
 Of such high talents ! What is human greatness ?
 I often said, this can't end happily.
 His might, his greatness, and this obscure power
 Are but a cover'd pit-fall. The human being
 May not be trusted to self-government.
 The clear and written law, the deep trod foot-marks
 Of ancient custom, are all necessary
 To keep him in the road of faith and duty.
 The authority entrusted to this man
 Was unexampled and unnatural,
 It placed him on a level with his Emperor,
 Till the proud soul unlearn'd submission.* Wo is me ;
 I mourn for him ! for where he fell, I deem
 Might none stand firm. Alas ! dear General,
 We in our lucky mediocrity
 Have ne'er experienced, cannot calculate,
 What dangerous wishes such a height may breed
 In the heart of such a man.

BUTLER.

Spare your laments
 Till he need sympathy ; for at this present
 He is still mighty, and still formidable.
 The Swedes advance to Egra by forced marches,
 And quickly will the junction be accomplish'd.
 This must not be ! The Duke must never leave
 This stronghold on free footing ; for I have
 Pledged life and honour here to hold him prisoner,
 And your assistance 'tis on which I calculate.

GORDON.

O that I had not lived to see this day!
 From his hand I received this dignity,
 He did himself entrust this stronghold to me,
 Which I am now required to make his dungeon.
 We subalterns have no will of our own;
 The free, the mighty man alone may listen
 To the fair impulse of his human nature.
 Ah! we are but the poor tools of the law,
 Obedience the sole virtue we dare aim at!

BUTLER.

Nay! let it not afflict you, that your power
 Is circumscribed. Much liberty, much error!
 The narrow path of duty is securest.

GORDON.

And all then have deserted him you say?
 He has built up the luck of many thousands;
 For kingly was his spirit: his full hand
 Was ever open! Many a one from dust

[With a sly glance on BUTLER.

Hath he selected, from the very dust
 Hath raised him into dignity and honour.
 And yet no friend, not one friend hath he purchased,
 Whose heart beats true to him in the evil hour.

BUTLER.

Here's one, I see.

GORDON.

I have enjoy'd from him
 No grace or favour. I could almost doubt,
 If ever in his greatness he once thought on
 An old friend of his youth. For still my office
 Kept me at distance from him; and when first
 He to this citadel appointed me,
 He was sincere and serious in his duty.
 I do not then abuse his confidence,
 If I preserve my fealty in that
 Which to my fealty was first delivered.

BUTLER.

Say, then, will you fulfil th' attainder on him,
 [And lend your aid to take him in arrest?]

GORDON (*pauses, reflecting—then as in deep dejection*).
 If it be so—if all be as you say—

If he've betray'd the Emperor, his master,
 Have sold the troops, have purposed to deliver
 The strongholds of the country to the enemy—
 Yea, truly!—there is no redemption for him!
 Yet it is hard, that me the lot should destine
 To be the instrument of his perdition;
 For we were pages at the court of Bergau
 At the same period; but I was the senior.

BUTLER.

I have heard so—

GORDON.

"Tis full thirty years since then.

A youth who scarce had seen his twentieth year
 Was Wallenstein, when he and I were friends:
 Yet even then he had a daring soul:
 His frame of mind was serious and severe
 Beyond his years: his dreams were of great objects.
 He walk'd amidst us of a silent spirit,
 Communing with himself; yet I have known him
 Transported on a sudden into utterance
 Of strange conceptions; kindling into splendour,
 His soul reveal'd itself, and he spake so
 That we look'd round perplex'd upon each other,
 Not knowing whether it were craziness,
 Or whether it were a god that spoke in him.

BUTLER.

But was it where he fell two story high
 From a window-ledge, on which he had fallen asleep,
 And rose up free from injury? From this day
 (It is reported) he betrayed clear marks
 Of a distemper'd fancy.

GORDON.

He became

Doubtless more self-enwrapt and melancholy;
 He made himself a Catholic*. Marvellously
 His marvellous preservation had transform'd him.
 Thenceforth he held himself for an exempted
 And privileged being, and, as if he were
 Incapable of dizziness or fall,

* It appears that the account of his conversion being caused by such a fall, and other stories of his juvenile character, are not well authenticated.

He ran along the unsteady rope of life.
 But now our destinies drove us asunder;
 He paced with rapid step the way of greatness,
 Was Count, and Prince, Duke-regent, and Dictator.
 And now is all, all this too little for him;
 He stretches forth his hands for a king's crown,
 And plunges in unfathomable ruin.

BUTLER.

No more, he comes.

SCENE III.

To these enter WALLENSTEIN, in conversation with the BURGOMASTER of Egra.

WALLENSTEIN.

You were at one time a free town. I see,
 Ye bear the half eagle in your city arms.
 Why the *half* eagle only?

BURGOMASTER.

We were free,
 But for these last two hundred years has Egra
 Remain'd in pledge to the Bohemian crown;
 Therefore we bear the *half* eagle, the other half
 Being cancell'd till the empire ransom us,
 If ever that should be.

WALLENSTEIN.

Ye merit freedom.
 Only be firm and dauntless. Lend your ears
 To no designing whispering court-minions.
 What may your imposts be?

BURGOMASTER.

So heavy that
 We totter under them. The garrison
 Lives at our costs.

WALLENSTEIN.

I will relieve you Tell me,
 There are some Protestants among you still?

[The BURGOMASTER hesitates.
 Yes, yes; I know it. Many lie conceal'd
 Within these walls—Confess now—you yourself—

[Fixes his eye on him. The BURGOMASTER alarmed.

Be not alarm'd. I hate the Jesuits.
 Could my will have determined it, they had
 Been long ago expell'd the empire. Trust me—
 Mass-book or bible, 'tis all one to me.
 Of that the world has had sufficient proof.
 I built a church for the Reform'd in Glegau
 At my own instance. Harkye, Burgomaster!
 What is your name?

BURGOMASTER.

Pachhalbel, may it please you.

WALLENSTEIN.

Harkye!—

But let it go no further, what I now
 Disclose to you in confidence.

[Laying his hand on the BURGOMASTER'S shoulder
 with a certain solemnity.

The times

Draw near to their fulfilment, Burgomaster!
 The high will fall, the low will be exalted.
 Harkye! But keep it to yourself! The end
 Approaches of the Spanish double monarchy—
 A new arrangement is at hand. You saw
 The three moons that appear'd at once in the Heaven?

BURGOMASTER.

With wonder and affright!

WALLENSTEIN.

Whereof did two
 Strangely transform themselves to bloody daggers,
 And only one, the middle moon, remained
 Steady and clear.

BURGOMASTER.

We applied it to the Turks.

WALLENSTEIN.

The Turks! That all?—I tell you, that two empires
 Will set in blood, in the East and in the West,
 And Luth'ranism alone remain.

[Observing GORDON and BUTLER.

I' faith,

'Twas a smart cannonading that we heard
 This evening, as we journey'd hitherward;
 'Twas on our left hand. Did you hear it here?

GORDON.

Distinctly. The wind brought it from the south.

BUTLER.

It seem'd to come from Weiden or from Neustadt.

WALLENSTEIN.

'Tis likely. That's the route the Swedes are taking.
How strong is the garrison?

GORDON.

Not quite two hundred
Competent men, the rest are invalids.

WALLENSTEIN.

Good! And how many in the vale of Jochim?

GORDON.

Two hundred arquebusiers have I sent thither
To fortify the posts against the Swedes.

WALLENSTEIN.

Good! I commend your foresight. At the works too
You have done somewhat?

GORDON.

Two additional batteries
I caused to be run up. They were needless.
The Rhinegrave presses hard upon us, General!

WALLENSTEIN.

You have been watchful in your Emperor's service.
I am content with you, Lieutenant-Colonel.

[To BUTLER.

Release the outposts in the vale of Jochim
With all the stations in the enemy's route.

[To GORDON.

Governor, in your faithful hands I leave
My wife, my daughter, and my sister. I
Shall make no stay here, and wait but the arrival
Of letters to take leave of you, together
With all the regiments.

SCENE IV.

To these enter COUNT TERZKY.

TERZKY.

Joy, General; joy! I bring you welcome tidings.

WALLENSTEIN.

And what may they be?

TERZKY.

There has been an engagement
At Neustadt; the Swedes gain'd the victory.

WALLENSTEIN.

From whence did you receive the intelligence?

TERZKY.

A countryman from Tirschenreut convey'd it.
Soon after sunrise did the fight begin?
A troop of the Imperialists from Tachau
Had forced their way into the Swedish camp;
The cannonade continued full two hours;
There were left dead upon the field a thousand
Imperialists, together with their Colonel;
Further than this he did not know.

WALLENSTEIN.

How came

Imperial troops at Neustadt? Altringer,
But yesterday, stood sixty miles from there.
Count Gallas' force collects at Frauenberg,
And have not the full complement. Is it possible
That Suys perchance had ventured so far onward?
It cannot be

TERZKY.

We shall soon know the whole,
For here comes Illo, full of haste, and joyous.

SCENE V.

To these enter ILLIO.

ILLIO (*to WALLENSTEIN*).

A courier, Duke! he wishes to speak with thee.

TERZKY (*eagerly*).

Does he bring confirmation of the victory?

WALLENSTEIN (*at the same time*).

What does he bring? Whence comes he?

ILLIO.

From the Rhinegrave
And what he brings I can announce to you

Beforehand. Seven leagues distant are the Swedes;
 At Neustadt did Max. Piccolomini
 Throw himself on them with the cavalry;
 A murderous fight took place! e'erpower'd by numbers
 The Pappenheimers all, with Max. their leader,
 [WELLENSTEIN shudders and turns pale
 Were left dead on the field.

WELLENSTEIN (*after a pause in a low voice*).
 Where is the messenger? Conduct me to him.
 [WELLENSTEIN is going, when LADY NEUBRUNN rushes
 into the room. Some servants follow her and run
 across the stage.

NEUBRUNN.

Help! Help!

ILLO and TERZKY (*at the same time*).

What now?

NEUBRUNN.

The Princess!

WELLENSTEIN and TERZKY.

Does she know it?

NEUBRUNN (*at the same time with them*).

She is dying!

[Hurries off the stage, when WELLENSTEIN and TERZKY
 follow her.

SCENE VI.

BUTLER and GORDON.

GORDON.

What's this?

BUTLER.

She has lost the man she loved—
 Young Piccolomini who fell in the battle.

GORDON.

Unfortunate Lady!

BUTLER.

You have heard what Illo
 Reporteth, that the Swedes are conquerors,
 And marching hitherward.

GORDON.

Too well I heard it.

BUTLER.

They are twelve regiments strong, and there are five
Close by us to protect the Duke. We have
Only my single regiment; and the garrison
Is not two hundred strong.

GORDON.

"Tis even so.

BUTLER.

It is not possible with such small force
To hold in custody a man like him.

GORDON

I grant it.

BUTLER.

Soon the numbers would disarm us,
And liberate him.

GORDON.

It were to be fear'd.

BUTLER (*after a pause*).

Know, I am warranty for the event;
With my head have I pledged myself for his,
Must make my word good, cost it what it will,
And if alive we cannot hold him prisoner,
Why—death makes all things certain!

GORDON.

Butler! What?

Do I understand you? Gracious God! You could—

BUTLER.

He must not live.

GORDON.

And you can do the deed!

BUTLER.

Either you or I. This morning was his last.

GORDON.

You would assassinate him.

BUTLER.

"Tis my purpose.

GORDON.

Who leans with his whole confidence upon you!

BUTLER.

Such is his evil destiny!

GORDON.

Your General!

The sacred person of your General!

BUTLER.

My General he has been.

GORDON.

That 'tis only

An "has been" washes out no villany.

And without judgment pass'd?

BUTLER.

The execution

Is here instead of judgment.

GORDON.

This were murder,

Not justice. The most guilty should be heard.

BUTLER.

His guilt is clear, the Emperor has pass'd judgment,
And we but execute his will.

GORDON.

We should not

Hurry to realize a bloody sentence.

A word may be recall'd, a life can never be.

BUTLER.

Despatch in service pleases sovereigns.

GORDON.

No honest man's ambitious to press forward
To the hangman's service.

BUTLER.

And no brave man loses

His colour at a daring enterprise.

GORDON.

A brave man hazards life, but not his conscience.

BUTLER.

What then? Shall he go forth anew to kindle
The unextinguishable flame of war?

GORDON.

Seize him, and hold him prisoner—do not kill him!

BUTLER.

Had not the Emperor's army been defeated,
I might have done so.—But 'tis now past by.

GORDON.

O, wherefore open'd I the stronghold to him?

BUTLER.

His destiny and not the place destroys him.

GORDON.

Upon these ramparts, as beseeam'd a soldier,
I had fallen, defending the Emperor's citadel!

BUTLER.

Yes! and a thousand gallant men have perish'd!

GORDON.

Doing their duty—that adorns the man!
But murder's a black deed, and nature curses it.

BUTLER (*brings out a paper*).

Here is the manifesto which commands us
To gain possession of his person. See—
It is addressed to you as well as me.
Are you content to take the consequences,
If through our fault he escape to the enemy?

GORDON.

I?—Gracious God!

BUTLER.

Take it on yourself.
Come of it what may, on you I lay it.

GORDON.

O God in heaven!

BUTLER,

Can you advise aught else
Wherewith to execute the Emperor's purpose?
Say if you can. For I desire his fall,
Not his destruction.

GORDON.

Merciful heaven! what must be
I see as clear as you. Yet still the heart
Within my bosom beats with other feelings!

BUTLER.

Mine is of harder stuff! Necessity
In her rough school hath steel'd me. And this Illo,
And Terzky likewise, they must not survive him.

GORDON.

I feel no pang for these. Their own bad hearts
Impell'd them, not the influence of the stars.
'Twas they who strew'd the seeds of evil passions
In his calm breast, and with officious villainy

Water'd and nursed the poi'sneus plants. May they
Receive their earnest to the uttermost mite!

BUTLER.

And their death shall precede his!
We meant to have taken them alive this evening
Amid the merry-making of a feast,
And keep them prisoners in the citadel.
But this makes shorter work. I go this instant
To give the necessary orders.

SCENE VII.

To these enter ILLO and TERZKY.

TERZKY.

Our luck is on the turn. To-morrow come
The Swedes—twelve thousand gallant warriors, Illo!
Then straightwise for Vienna. Cheerily, friend!
What! meet such news with such a moody face?

ILLO.

It lies with us at present to prescribe
Laws, and take vengeance on those worthless traitors,
Those skulking cowards that deserted us;
One has already done his bitter penance,
The Piccolomini: be his the fate
Of all who wish us evil! This flies sure
To the old man's heart; he has his whole life long
Fretted and toil'd to raise his ancient house
From a Count's title to the name of prince;
And now must seek a grave for his only son.

BUTLER.

'Twas pity, though! A youth of such heretic
And gentle temperament! The Duke himself,
'Twas easily seen, how near it went to his heart.

ILLO.

Hark ye, old friend! That is the very point
That never pleased me in our General—
He ever gave the preference to the Italians.
Yea, at this very moment, by my soul!
He'd gladly see us all dead ten times over,
Could he thereby recall his friend to life.

TERZKY.

Hush, hush! Let the dead rest! This evening's business
Is, who can fairly drink the other down—

Your regiment, Illo ! gives the entertainment.
 Come ! we will keep a merry carnival—
 The night for once be day, and 'mid full glasses
 Will we expect the Swedish avant-garde.

ILLO.

Yes, let us be of good cheer for to-day,
 For there's hot work before us, friends ! This sword
 Shall have no rest, till it be bathed to the hilt
 In Austrian blood.

GORDON.

Shame, shame ! what talk is this
 My Lord Field-Marshal ? Wherefore foam you so
 Against your Emperor ?

BUTLER.

Hope not too much
 From this first victory. Bethink you, sirs !
 How rapidly the wheel of Fortune turns ;
 The Emperor still is formidably strong.

ILLO.

The Emperor has soldiers, no commander,
 For this King Ferdinand of Hungary
 Is but a tyro. Gallas ? He's no luck,
 And was of old the ruiner of armies.
 And then this viper, this Octavio,
 Is excellent at stabbing in the back,
 But ne'er meets Friedland in the open field.

TERZKY.

Trust me, my friends, it cannot but succeed ;
 Fortune, we know, can ne'er forsake the Duke !
 And only under Wallenstein can Austria
 Be conqueror.

ILLO.

The Duke will soon assemble
 A mighty army : all comes crowding, streaming
 To banners, dedicate by destiny,
 To fame, and prosperous fortune. I behold
 Old times come back again ! he will become
 Once more the mighty Lord which he has been.
 How will the fools, who've now deserted him,
 Look then ? I can't but laugh to think of them,
 For lands will he present to all his friends,

And like a King and Emperor reward
True services ; but we've the nearest claims.

[*To GORDON.*

You will not be forgotten, Governor!
He'll take you from this nest, and bid you shine
In higher station : your fidelity
Well merits it.

GORDON.

I am content already,
And wish to climb no higher ; where great height is,
The fall must needs be great. "Great height, great depth."

ILLO.

Here you have no more business, for to-morrow
The Swedes will take possession of the citadel.
Come, Terzky, it is supper-time. What think you ?
Nay, shall we have the town illuminated
In honour of the Swede? And who refuses
To do it is a Spaniard and a traitor.

TERZKY.

Nay ! nay ! not that, it will not please the Duke—

ILLO.

What ! we are masters here ; no soul shall dare
Avow himself Imperial where we've the rule.
Gordon ! good night, and for the last time, take
A fair leave of the place. Send out patrols
To make secure, the watch-word may be alter'd
At the stroke of ten ; deliver in the keys
To the Duke himself, and then you've quit for ever
Your wardship of the gates, for on to-morrow
The Swedes will take possession of the citadel.

TERZKY (*as he is going, to BUTLER.*)

You come, though, to the castle?

BUTLER.

At the right time.

[*Exeunt TERZKY and ILLO.*

SCENE VIII.

GORDON and BUTLER.

GORDON (*looking after them.*)

Unhappy men ! How free from all foreboding !
They rush into the outspread net of murder,

In the blind drunkenness of victory;
 I have no pity for their fate. This Ille,
 This overflowing and foolhardy villain,
 That would fain bathe himself in his Emperor's blood.—

BUTLER.

Do as he order'd you. Send round patrols,
 Take measures for the citadel's security;
 When they are within I close the castle-gate
 That nothing may transpire.

GORDON (*with earnest anxiety*).

Oh! haste not so!

Nay, stop; first tell me—

BUTLER.

You have heard already,
 To-morrow to the Swedes belongs. This night
 Alone is ours. They make good expedition.
 But we will make still greater. Fare you well.

GORDON.

Ah! your looks tell me nothing good. Nay, Butler,
 I pray you, promise me!

BUTLER.

The sun has set;
 A fateful evening doth descend upon us,
 And brings on their long night! Their evil stars
 Deliver them unarm'd into our hands,
 And from their drunken dream of golden fortunes
 The dagger at their heart shall rouse them. Well,
 The Duke was ever a great calculator;
 His fellow-men were figures on his chess-board,
 To move and station, as his game required.
 Other men's honour, dignity, good name,
 Did he shift like pawns, and made no conscience of
 Still calculating, calculating still;
 And yet at last his calculation proves
 Erroneous; the whole game is lost; and lo!
 His own life will be found among the forfeits.

GORDON.

O think not of his errors now! remember
 His greatness, his munificence; think on all

The lovely features of his character,
On all the noble exploits of his life,
And let them, like an angel's arm, unseen,
Arrest the lifted sword.

BUTLER.

It is too late.

I suffer not myself to feel compassion,
Dark thoughts and bloody are my duty now:
[*Grasping Gordon's hand.*

Gordon! 'tis not my hatred, (I pretend not
To love the Duke, and have no cause to love him,) Yet 'tis not now my hatred that impels me
To be his murderer. 'Tis his evil fate.
Hostile concurrences of many events
Control and subjugate me to the office.
In vain the human being meditates
Free action. He is but the wire-work'd* puppet
Of the blind Power, which out of its own choice
Creates for him a dread necessity.
What too would it avail him, if there were
A something pleading for him in my heart—
Still I must kill him.

GORDON.

If your heart speak to you,
Follow its impulse. 'Tis the voice of God.
Think you your fortunes will grow prosperous
Bedew'd with blood—his blood? Believe it not!

BUTLER.

You know not. Ask not! Wherefore should it happen,
That the Swedes gain'd the victory, and hasten
With such forced marches hitherwards? Fain would I
Have given him to the Emperor's mercy. Gordon!
I do not wish his blood—But I must ransom
The honour of my word,—it lies in pledge—
And he must die, or—

[*Passionately grasping Gordon's hand.*

Listen then, and know,

I am dishonour'd if the Duke escape us.

* We doubt the propriety of putting so blasphemous a statement in the mouth of any character.—T.

GORDON.

O! to save such a man—

BUTLER.

What!

GORDON.

It is worth
A sacrifice. Come, friend! Be noble-minded!
Our own heart, and not other men's opinions,
Forms our true honour.

BUTLER (*with a cold and haughty air*).

He is a great Lord,
This Duke—and I am but of mean importance.
This is what you would say! Wherein concerns it
The world at large, you mean to hint to me,
Whether the man of low extraction keeps
Or blemishes his honour—
So that the man of princely rank be saved?
We all do stamp our value on ourselves:
The price we challenge for ourselves is given us.
There does not live on earth the man so station'd,
That I despise myself compared with him.
Man is made great or little by his own will;
Because I am true to mine, therefore he dies.

GORDON.

I am endeavouring to move a rock.
Thou hadst a mother, yet no human feelings.
I cannot hinder you, but may some God
Rescue him from you! [Exit GORDON.

BUTLER * (*alone*).

I treasured my good name all my life long;
The Duke has cheated me of life's best jewel,
So that I blush before this poor weak Gordon!
He prizes above all his fealty;
His conscious soul accuses him of nothing;
In opposition to his own soft heart;
He subjugates himself to an iron duty.

* [This soliloquy, which, according to the former arrangement, constituted the whole of Scene IX., and concluded the Fourth Act, is omitted in all the printed German editions. It seems probable that it existed in the original manuscript from which Mr. Coleridge translated.—*Ed.*]

Me in a weaker moment passion warp'd;
 I stand beside him, and must feel myself
 The worse man of the two. What, though the world
 Is ignorant of my purposed treason, yet
 One man does know it, and can prove it too—
 High-minded Piccolomini !
 There lives the man who can dishonour me !
 This ignominy blood alone can cleanse !
 Duke Friedland, thou or I—Into my own hands
 Fortune delivers me—The dearest thing a man has is him-
 self.

SCENE IX.

A Gothic and gloomy Apartment at the DUCHESS FRIEDLAND's.
THEKLA on a seat, pale, her eyes closed. The DUCHESS and LADY NEUBRUNN busied about her. WALLENSTEIN and the COUNTESS in conversation.

WALLENSTEIN.

How knew she it so soon ?

COUNTESS.

She seems to have
 Foreboded some misfortune. The report
 Of an engagement, in the which had fallen
 A colonel of the Imperial army, frighten'd her.
 I saw it instantly. She flew to meet
 The Swedish courier, and with sudden questioning,
 Soon wrested from him the disastrous secret.
 Too late we missed her, hasten'd after her,
 We found her lying in his arms, all pale
 And in a swoon.

WALLENSTEIN.

A heavy, heavy blow !
 And she so unprepared ! Poor child ! how is it ?
 [Turning to the DUCHESS
 Is she coming to herself ?

DUCHESS.

Her eyes are opening.

COUNTESS.

She lives !

THEKLA (*looking around her*).
 Where am I ?

WALLENSTEIN (*steps to her, raising her up in his arms*).
 Come, cheerly, Thekla ! be my own brave girl !
 See, there's thy loving mother. Thou art in
 Thy father's arms.

THEKLA (*standing up*).

Where is he ? Is he gone ?

DUCHESS.

Who gone, my daughter ?

THEKLA.

He—the man who utter'd
 That word of misery.

DUCHESS.

O ! think not of it,

My Thekla !

WALLENSTEIN.

Give her sorrow leave to talk !
 Let her complain—mingle your tears with hers,
 For she hath suffer'd a deep anguish ; but
 She'll rise superior to it, for my Thekla
 Hath all her father's unsubdued heart.

THEKLA.

I am not ill. See, I have power to stand.
 Why does my mother weep ? Have I alarm'd her ?
 It is gone by—I recollect myself—

[*She casts her eyes round the room, as seeking some one*
 Where is he ? Please you, do not hide him from me.
 You see I have strength enough : now I will hear him.

DUCHESS.

No ; never shall this messenger of evil
 Enter again into thy presence, Thekla !

THEKLA.

My father—

WALLENSTEIN.

Dearest daughter !

THEKLA.

I'm not weak—
 Shortly I shall be quite myself again.
 You'll grant me one request ?

WALLENSTEIN.

Name it, my daughter.

THEKLA.

Permit the stranger to be called to me,
And grant me leave, that by myself I may
Hear his report and question him.

DUCHESS.

No, never!

COUNTESS.

'Tis not advisable—assent not to it.

WALLENSTEIN

Hush! Wherefore wouldst thou speak with him, my
daughter?

THEKLA.

Knowing the whole, I shall be more collected;
I will not be deceived. My mother wishes
Only to spare me. I will not be spared—
The worst is said already: I can hear
Nothing of deeper anguish!

COUNTESS and DUCHESS.

Do it not.

THEKLA.

The horror overpower'd me by surprise.
My heart betray'd me in the stranger's presence:
He was a witness of my weakness, yea,
I sank into his arms; and that has shamed me.
I must replace myself in his esteem,
And I must speak with him, perforce, that he,
The stranger, may not think ungently of me.

WALLENSTEIN.

I see she is in the right, and am inclined
To grant her this request of hers. Go, call him.

[LADY NEUBRUNN goes to call him.

DUCHESS.

But I, thy mother, will be present—

THEKLA.

Twere
More pleasing to me, if alone I saw him;
Trust me, I shall behave myself the more
Collectedly.

WALLENSTEIN.

Permit her her own will.

Leave her alone with him: for there are sorrows,
Where of necessity the soul must be
Its own support. A strong heart will rely
On its own strength alone. In her own bosom,
Not in her mother's arms, must she collect
The strength to rise superior to this blow.
It is mine own brave girl. I'll have her treated
Not as the woman, but the heroine.

[Going.

COUNTESS (*detaining him*).

Where art thou going? I heard Terzky say
That 'tis *thy* purpose to depart from hence
To-morrow early, but to leave us here.

WALLENSTEIN.

Yes, ye stay here, placed under the protection
Of gallant men.

COUNTESS.

O take us with you, brother!
Leave us not in this gloomy solitude
To brood o'er anxious thoughts. The mists of doubt
Magnify evils to a shape of horror.

WALLENSTEIN.

Who speaks of evil? I entreat you, sister,
Use words of better omen.

COUNTESS.

Then take us with you.
O leave us not behind you in a place
That forces us to such sad omens. Heavy
And sick within me is my heart——
These walls breathe on me, like a church-yard vault.
I cannot tell you, brother, how this place
Doth go against my nature. Take us with you.
Come, sister, join you your entreaty! Niece,
Yours too. We all entreat you, take us with you!

WALLENSTEIN.

The place's evil omens will I change,
Making it that which shields and shelters for me
My best beloved.

LADY NEUBRUNN (*returning*).

The Swedish officer.

WALLENSTEIN.

Leave her alone with me.

DUCHESS (*to THEKLA, who starts and shivers*).
There—pale as death ! Child, 'tis impossible
That thou shouldst speak with him. Follow thy mother.

THEKLA.

The Lady Neubrunn then may stay with me.

[*Exeunt DUCHESS and COUNTESS*

SCENE X.

THEKLA, THE SWEDISH CAPTAIN, LADY NEUBRUNN.

CAPTAIN (*respectfully approaching her*).
Princess—I must entreat your gentle pardon—
My inconsiderate rash speech. How could I—

THEKLA (*with dignity*).

You have beheld me in my agony.
A most distressful accident occasion'd
You from a stranger to become at once
My confidant.

CAPTAIN.

I fear you hate my presence,
For my tongue spake a melancholy word.

THEKLA.

The fault is mine. Myself did wrest it from you.
The horror which came o'er me interrupted
Your tale at its commencement. May it please you,
Continue it to the end.

CAPTAIN.

Princess, 'twill

Renew your anguish.

THEKLA.

I am firm,—

I will be firm. Well—how began the engagement?

CAPTAIN.

We lay, expecting no attack, at Neustadt,
Entrench'd but insecurely in our camp,

When towards evening rose a cloud of dust
 From the wood thitherward ; our vanguard fled
 Into the camp, and sounded the alarm.
 Scarce had we mounted, ere the Pappenheimers,
 Their horses at full speed, broke through the lines,
 And leapt the trenches ; but their heedless courage
 Had borne them onward far before the others—
 The infantry were still at distance, only
 The Pappenheimers follow'd daintily
 Their daring leader—

[THEKLA betrays agitation in her gestures. The officer
 pauses till she makes a sign to him to proceed.

CAPTAIN.

Both in van and flanks
 With our whole cavalry we now received them ;
 Back to the trenches drove them, where the foot
 Stretch'd out a solid ridge of pikes to meet them..
 They neither could advance, nor yet retreat ;
 And as they stood on every side wedged in,
 The Rhinegrave to their leader call'd aloud,
 Inviting a surrender ; but their leader,
 Young Piccolomini—

[THEKLA, as giddy, grasps a chair.
 Known by his plume,

And his long hair, gave signal for the trenches ;
 Himself leapt first : the regiment all plunged after.
 His charger, by a halbert gored, rear'd up,
 Flung him with violence off, and over him
 The horses, now no longer to be curbed,—

[THEKLA, who has accompanied the last speech with all
 the marks of increasing agony, trembles through her
 whole frame, and is falling. The LADY NEUBRUNN
 runs to her, and receives her in her arms.

NEUBRUNN.

My dearest lady—

CAPTAIN.

I retire

THEKLA.

Tis over.

Proceed to the conclusion.

CAPTAIN.

Wild despair.

Inspired the troops with frenzy when they saw
Their leader perish ; every thought of rescue
Was spurned ; they fought like wounded tigers ; their
Frantic resistance roused our soldiery ;
A murderous fight took place, nor was the contest
Finish'd before their last man fell.

THEKLA (*faltering*).

And where—

Where is—You have not told me all.

CAPTAIN (*after a pause*).

This morning

We buried him. Twelve youths of noblest birth
Did bear him to interment ; the whole army
Follow'd the bier. A laurel deck'd his coffin ;
The sword of the deceased was placed upon it,
In mark of honour, by the Rhinegrave's self.
Nor tears were wanting ; for there are among us
Many, who had themselves experienced
The greatness of his mind, and gentle manners ;
All were affected at his fate. The Rhinegrave
Would willingly have saved him ; but himself
Made vain the attempt—'tis said he wish'd to die.

NEUBRUNN (*to THEKLA, who has hidden her countenance*).
Look up, my dearest lady—

THEKLA.

Where is his grave ?

CAPTAIN.

At Neustadt, lady ; in a cloister church
Are his remains deposited, until
We can receive directions from his father.

THEKLA.

What is the cloister's name ?

CAPTAIN.

Saint Catherine's.

THEKLA.

And how far is it thither ?

CAPTAIN.

Near twelve leagues.

THEKLA.

And which the way?

CAPTAIN.

You go by Tirschenreut
And Falkenberg, through our advanced posts.

THEKLA.

Who
Is their commander?

CAPTAIN.

Colonel Seckendorf.

[THEKLA steps to the table, and takes a ring from a casket.

THEKLA.

You have beheld me in my agony,
And shown a feeling heart. Please you, accept

A small memorial of this hour. Now go!

[Giving him the ring.

CAPTAIN (*confusedly*).

Princess—

[THEKLA silently makes signs to him to go, and turns from him. The CAPTAIN lingers, and is about to speak. LADY NEUBRUNN repeats the signal, and he retires.

SCENE XI:

THEKLA, LADY NEUBRUNN.

THEKLA (*falls on LADY NEUBRUNN's neck*).

Now, gentle Neubrunn, show me the affection
Which thou hast ever promised—prove thyself
My own true friend and faithful fellow-pilgrim.
This night we must away!

NEUBRUNN.

Away! and whither?

THEKLA.

Whither! There is but one place in the world.
Thither, where he lies buried! To his coffin!

NEUBRUNN.

What would you do there?

THEKLA.

What do there?

That wouldst thou not have ask'd, hadst thou e'er loved.
There, there is all that still remains of him!
That single spot is the whole earth to me.

NEUBRUNN.

That place of death——

THEKLA.

Is now the only place
Where life yet dwells for me: detain me not!
Come and make preparations; let us think
Of means to fly from hence.

NEUBRUNN.

Your father's rage——

THEKLA.

That time is past——
And now I fear no human being's rage.

NEUBRUNN.

The sentence of the world! The tongue of calumny!

THEKLA.

Whom am I seeking? Him who is no more.
Am I then hastening to the arms——O God!
I haste but to the grave of the beloved.

NEUBRUNN.

And we alone, two helpless feeble women?

THEKLA.

We will take weapons: my arm shall protect thee.

NEUBRUNN.

In the dark night-time?

THEKLA.

Darkness will conceal us.

NEUBRUNN.

This rough tempestuous night——

THEKLA.

Had he a soft bed
Under the hoofs of his war-horses?

NEUBRUNN.

Heaven!

And then the many posts of the enemy!

THEKLA.

They are human beings. Misery travels free
Through the whole earth.

NEUBRUNN.

The journey's weary length—

THEKLA.

The pilgrim, travelling to a distant shrine
Of hope and healing, doth not count the leagues.

NEUBRUNN.

How can we pass the gates?

THEKLA.

Gold opens them.

Go, do but go.

NEUBRUNN.

Should we be recognised—

THEKLA.

In a despairing woman, a poor fugitive,
Will no one seek the daughter of Duke Friedland.

NEUBRUNN.

And where procure we horses for our flight?

THEKLA.

My equerry procures them. Go and fetch him.

NEUBRUNN.

Dares he, without the knowledge of his lord?

THEKLA.

He will. Go, only go. Delay no longer.

NEUBRUNN.

Dear lady! and your mother?

THEKLA.

Oh! my mother!

NEUBRUNN.

So much as she has suffer'd too already;
Your tender mother—Ah! how ill prepared
For this last anguish!

THEKLA.

Woe is me! my mother!

[*Pause.*]

Go instantly.

NEUBRUNN.

But think what you are doing!

THEKLA.

What can be thought, already has been thought.

NEUBRUNN.

And being there, what purpose you to do?

THEKLA.

There a Divinity will prompt my soul.

NEUBRUNN.

Your heart, dear lady, is disquieted!

And this is not the way that leads to quiet,

THEKLA.

To a deep quiet, such as he has found.

It draws me on, I know not what to name it,

Resistless does it draw me to his grave.

There will my heart be eased, my tears will flow.

O hasten, make no further questioning!

There is no rest for me till I have left.

These walls—they fall in on me—a dim power

Drives me from hence—Oh mercy! What a feeling!

What pale and hollow forms are those! They fill,

They crowd the place! I have no longer room here!

Mercy! Still more! More still! The hideous swarm!

They press on me; they chase me from these walls—

Those hollow, bodiless forms of living men!

NEUBRUNN.

You frighten me so, lady, that no longer

I dare stay here myself. I go and call

Rosenberg instantly. [Exit LADY NEUBRUNN.

SCENE XII.

THEKLA.

His spirit 'tis that calls me: 'tis the troop

Of his true followers, who offer'd up

Themselves to avenge his death: and they accuse me

Of an ignoble loitering—they would not

Forsake their leader even in his death—they died for him!

And shall I live?—

For me too was that laurel-garland twined

That decks his bier. Life is an empty casket:

I throw it from me. O! my only hope;—
To die beneath the hoofs of trampling steeds—
That is the lot of heroes upon earth!

[Exit THEKLA*.

(The Curtain drops.)

SCENE XIII.

THEKLA, LADY NEUBRUNN, and ROSENBERG.

[NEUBRUNN.

He is here lady, and he will procure them.

THEKLA.

Wilt thou provide us horses, Rosenberg?

ROSENBERG.

I will, my lady.

THEKLA.

And go with us as well?

ROSENBERG.

To the world's end, my lady.

THEKLA.

But consider,

Thou never canst return unto the Duke.

ROSENBERG.

I will remain with thee.

THEKLA.

I will reward thee,

And will command thee to another master,
Canst thou unseen conduct us from the castle?

ROSENBERG.

I can.

THEKLA.

When can I go?

ROSENBERG.

This very hour.

But whither would you, Lady?

THEKLA.

To—— Tell him, Neubrunn.

* The soliloquy of Thekla consists in the original of six-and-twenty lines, twenty of which are in rhymes of irregular recurrence. I thought it prudent to abridge it. Indeed the whole scene between Thekla and Lady Neubrunn might, perhaps, have been omitted without injury to the play.—C.

NEUBRUNN.

To Neustadt.

ROSENBERG.

So;—I leave you to get ready. [Exit.

NEUBRUNN.

O see, your mother comes.

THEKLA.

Indeed! O Heav'n!

SCENE XIV.

THEKLA, LADY NEUBRUNN, the DUCHESS.

DUCHESS.

He's gone! I find thee more composed, my child.

THEKLA.

I am so, mother; let me only now
Retire to rest, and Neubrunn here be with me.
I want repose.

DUCHESS.

My Thekla, thou shalt have it.
I leave thee now consoled, since I can calm
Thy father's heart.

THEKLA.

Good night, beloved mother!

(Falling on her neck and embracing her with deep emotion.)

DUCHESS.

Thou scarcely art composed e'en now, my daughter.
Thou tremblest strongly, and I feel thy heart
Beat audibly on mine.

THEKLA.

Sleep will appease

Its beating: now good night, good night, dear mother.]
(As she withdraws from her mother's arms the curtain falls.)

ACT V.

SCENE I.

Butler's Chamber.

BUTLER, and MAJOR GERALDIN.

BUTLER.

Find me twelve strong dragoons, arm them with pikes,
For there must be no firing——

Conceal them somewhere near the banquet-room,
 And soon as the dessert is served up, rush all in.
 And cry—"Who is loyal to the Emperor!"
 I will overturn the table—while you attack
 Illo and Terzky, and despatch them both.
 The castle-palace is well barr'd and guarded,
 That no intelligence of this proceeding
 May make its way to the Duke. Go instantly;
 Have you yet sent for Captain Devereux
 And the Macdonald?—

GERALDIN.

They'll be here anon.

[Exit GERALDIN.]

BUTLER.

Here's no room for delay. The citizens
 Declare for him, a dizzy drunken spirit
 Possesses the whole town. They see in the Duke
 A Prince of peace, a founder of new ages
 And golden times. Arms too have been given out
 By the town-council, and a hundred citizens
 Have volunteered themselves to stand on guard.
 Despatch! then, be the word; for enemies
 Threaten us from without and from within.

SCENE II.

BUTLER, CAPTAIN DEVEREUX, and MACDONALD.

MACDONALD.

Here we are, General.

DEVEREUX.

What's to be the watchword?

BUTLER.

Long live the Emperor!

BOTH (*recoiling*).

How?

BUTLER.

Live the House of Austria!

DEVEREUX.

Have we not sworn fidelity to Friedland?

MACDONALD.

Have we not march'd to this place to protect him?

BUTLER.

Protect a traitor, and his country's enemy ?

DEVEREUX.

Why, yes ! in his name you administer'd
Our oath.

MACDONALD.

And follow'd him yourself to Egra.

BUTLER.

I did it the more surely to destroy him.

DEVEREUX.

So then !

MACDONALD.

An alter'd case !

BUTLER (to DEVEREUX).

Thou wretched man
So easily leavest thou thy oath and colours ?

DEVEREUX.

The devil !—I but follow'd your example,
If you could prove a villain, why not we ?

MACDONALD.

We've nought to do with *thinking*—that's your business.
You are our General, and give out the orders ;
We follow you, though the track lead to hell.

BUTLER (*appeared*)

Good then ! we know each other.

MACDONALD.

I should hope so.

DEVEREUX.

Soldiers of fortune are we—who bids most,
He has us.

MACDONALD.

"Tis e'en so !

BUTLER.

Well, for the present
Ye must remain honest and faithful soldiers.

DEVEREUX.

We wish no other.

BUTLER

Ay, and make your fortunes.

MACDONALD.

That is still better.

Listen!

BOTH.

We attend.

BUTLER.

It is the Emperor's will and ordinance
To seize the person of the Prince-Duke Friedland,
Alive or dead.

DEVEREUX.

It runs so in the letter.

MACDONALD.

Alive or dead—these were the very words.

BUTLER.

And he shall be rewarded from the State
In land and gold, who proffers aid thereto.

DEVEREUX.

Ay! that sounds well. The *words* sound always well
That travel hither from the Court. Yes! yes!
We know already what Court-words import.
A golden chain perhaps in sign of favour,
Or an old charger, or a parchment patent,
And such like.—The Prince-Duke pays better.

MACDONALD.

Yes,

The Duke's a splendid paymaster.

BUTLER.

All over
With that, my friends! His lucky stars are set.

MACDONALD.

And is that certain?

BUTLER.

You have my word for it.

DEVEREUX.

His lucky fortunes all past by?

BUTLER.

For ever.

He is as poor as we.

MACDONALD.

As poor as we?

DEVEREUX.

Macdonald, we'll desert him.

BUTLER.

We'll desert him ?
 Full twenty thousand have done that already ;
 We must do more, my countrymen ! In short—
 We—we must kill him.

BOTH (*starting back*).

Kill him !

BUTLER.

Yes, must kill him ;
 And for that purpose have I chosen you.

BOTH.

Us !

BUTLER.

You, Captain Devereux, and thee, Macdonald.

DEVEREUX (*after a pause*).

Choose you some other.

BUTLER.

What ! art dastardly ?

Thou, with full thirty lives to answer for—
 Thou conscientious of a sudden ?

DEVEREUX.

Nay

To assassinate our Lord and General—

MACDONALD.

To whom we've sworn a soldier's oath—

BUTLER.

The oath

Is null, for Friedland is a traitor.

DEVEREUX.

No, no ! it is too bad !

MACDONALD.

Yes, by my soul !

It is too bad. One has a conscience too—

DEVEREUX.

If it were not our Chieftain, who so long
 Has issued the commands, and claim'd our duty—

BUTLER.

Is that the objection ?

DEVEREUX.

Were it my own father,
And the Emperor's service should demand it of me,
It might be done perhaps—But we are soldiers,
And to assassinate our Chief Commander,
That is a sin, a foul abomination,
From which no monk or confessor absolves us.

BUTLER.

I am your Pope, and give you absolution.
Determine quickly!

DEVEREUX.

'Twill not do.

MACDONALD.

"Twon't do !

BUTLER.

Well, off then ! and—send Pestalutz to me.

DEVEREUX (*hesitates*).

The Pestalutz—

MACDONALD.

What may you want with him ?

BUTLER.

If you reject it, we can find enough—

DEVEREUX.

Nay, if he must fall, we may earn the bounty
As well as any other. What think you,
Brother Macdonald ?

MACDONALD.

Why, if he *must* fall,
And *will* fall, and it can't be otherwise,
One would not give place to this Pestalutz.

DEVEREUX (*after some reflection*).

When do you purpose he should fall ?

BUTLER.

This night.

To-morrow will the Swedes be at our gates.

DEVEREUX.

You take upon you all the consequences ?

BUTLER.

I take the whole upon me.

DEVEREUX.

And it is
The Emperor's will, his express absolute will?
For we have instances, that folks may like
The murder, and yet hang the murderer.

BUTLER.

The manifesto says—"alive or dead."
Alive—'tis not possible—you see it is not.

DEVEREUX.

Well, dead then! dead! But how can we come at him?
The town is filled with Terzky's soldiery.

MACDONALD.

Ay! and then Terzky still remains, and Illo——

BUTLER.

With these you shall begin—you understand me?

DEVEREUX.

How! And must they too perish?

BUTLER.

They the first.

MACDONALD.

Hear, Devereux! A bloody evening this.

DEVEREUX.

Have you a man for that? Commission me—

BUTLER.

'Tis given in trust to Major Geraldin;
This is a carnival night, and there's a feast
Given at the castle—there we shall surprise them,
And hew them down. The Pestalutz and Lesley
Have that commission. Soon as that is finish'd—

DEVEREUX.

Hear, General! It will be all one to you—
Hark ye, let me exchange with Geraldin.

BUTLER.

Twill be the lesser danger with the Duke.

DEVEREUX.

Danger! The devil! What do you think me, General?
'Tis the Duke's eye, and not his sword, I fear.

BUTLER.

What can his eye do to thee?

DEVEREUX.

Death and hell!

Thou know'st that I'm no milksop, General!
But 'tis not eight days since the Duke did send me
Twenty gold pieces for this good warm coat
Which I have on! and then for him to see me
Standing before him with the pike, his murderer,
That eye of his looking upon this coat—
Why—why—the devil fetch me! I'm no milksop!

BUTLER.

The Duke presented thee this good warm coat,
And thou, a needy wight, hast pangs of conscience
To run him through the body in return.
A coat that is far better and far warmer
Did the Emperor give to him, the Prince's mantle.
How doth he thank the Emperor? With revolt,
And treason.

DEVEREUX.

That is true. The devil take
Such thankers! I'll despatch him.

BUTLER.

And wouldst quiet
Thy conscience, thou hast nought to do but simply
Pull off the coat; so canst thou do the deed
With light heart and good spirits.

DEVEREUX.

You are right.
That did not strike me. I'll pull off the coat—
So there's an end of it.

MACDONALD.

Yes, but there's another
Point to be thought of.

BUTLER.

And what's that, Macdonald?

MACDONALD.

What avails sword or dagger against him?
He is not to be wounded—he is—

BUTLER (*starting up*).

What?

MACDONALD.

Safe against shot, and stab, and flesh! Hard frozen,

Secured and warranted by the black art!
His body is impenetrable, I tell you.

DEVEREUX.

In Ingolstadt there was just such another:
His whole skin was the same as steel; at last
We were obliged to beat him down with gunstocks.

MACDONALD.

Hear what I'll do.

DEVEREUX.

Well.

MACDONALD.

In the cloister here

There's a Dominican, my countryman.
I'll make him dip my sword and pike for me
In holy water, and say over them
One of his strongest blessings. That's probatum!
Nothing can stand 'gainst that.

BUTLER

So do, Macdonald!

But now go and select from out the regiment
Twenty or thirty able-bodied fellows,
And let them take the oaths to the Emperor.
Then when it strikes eleven, when the first rounds
Are pass'd, conduct them silently as may be
To the house—I will myself be not far off.

DEVEREUX.

But how do we get through Hartschier and Gordon,
That stand on guard there in the inner chamber?

BUTLER.

I have made myself acquainted with the place,
I lead you through a back door that's defended
By one man only. Me my rank and office
Give access to the Duke at every hour.
I'll go before you—with one poniard-stroke
Cut Hartschier's windpipe, and make way for you.

DEVEREUX.

And when we are there, by what means shall we gain
The Duke's bed-chamber, without his alarming
The servants of the Court: for he has here
A numerous company of followers?

BUTLER.

The attendants fill the right wing : he hates bustle,
And lodges in the left wing quite alone.

DEVEREUX.

Were it well over—hey, Macdonald ? I
Feel queerly on the occasion, devil knows !

MACDONALD.

And I too. 'Tis too great a personage.
People will hold us for a brace of villains.

BUTLER.

In plenty, honour, splendour—you may safely
Laugh at the people's babble.

DEVEREUX.

If the business
Squares with one's honour—if that be quite certain—

BUTLER.

Set your hearts quite at ease. Ye save for Ferdinand
His crown and empire. The reward can be
No small one.

DEVEREUX.

And 'tis his purpose to dethrone the Emperor?

BUTLER.

Yes !—Yes !—to rob him of his crown and life.

DEVEREUX.

And he must fall by the executioner's hands,
Should we deliver him up to the Emperor
Alive ?

BUTLER.

It were his certain destiny.

DEVEREUX.

Well ! Well ! Come then, Macdonald, he shall not
Lie long in pain.

[*Exeunt BUTLER through one door, MACDONALD and
DEVEREUX through the other.*

SCENE III.

A Saloon, terminated by a Gallery which extends far into the background.

WALLENSTEIN sitting at a table. The SWEDISH CAPTAIN
standing before him.

WALLENSTEIN.

Commend me to your lord. I sympathize

In his good fortune ; and if you have seen me
 Deficient in the expressions of that joy,
 Which such a victory might well demand,
 Attribute it to no lack of good will,
 For henceforth are our fortunes one. Farewell,
 And for your trouble take my thanks. To-morrow
 The citadel shall be surrender'd to you
 On your arrival.

[*The SWEDISH CAPTAIN retires. WALLENSTEIN sits lost in thought, his eyes fixed vacantly, and his head sustained by his hand. The COUNTESS TERZKY enters, stands before him for awhile, unobserved by him; at length he starts, sees her and recollects himself.*]

WALLENSTEIN.

Comest thou from her ? Is she restored ? How is she ?

COUNTESS.

My sister tells me, she was more collected
 After her conversation with the Swede.
 She has now retired to rest.

WALLENSTEIN.

The pang will soften,

She will shed tears.

COUNTESS.

I find thee alter'd too,
 My brother ! After such a victory
 I had expected to have found in thee
 A cheerful spirit. O remain thou firm !
 Sustain, uphold us ! For our light thou art,
 Our sun.

WALLENSTEIN.

Be quiet. I ail nothing. Where's
 Thy husband ?

COUNTESS.

At a banquet—he and Illo.

WALLENSTEIN (*rises and strides across the saloon*).
 The night's far spent. Betake thee to thy chamber.

COUNTESS.

Bid me not go, O let me stay with thee !

WÄLLENSTEIN (*moves to the window*).

There is a busy motion in the Heaven,
The wind doth chase the flag upon the tower,
Fast sweep the clouds, the sickle * of the moon,
Struggling, darts snatches of uncertain light.
No form of star is visible ! That one
White stain of light, that single glimmering yonder,
Is from Cassiopeia, and therein
Is Jupiter. (*A pause*). But now
The blackness of the troubled element hides him !

[*He sinks into profound melancholy, and looks vacantly into the distance.*]

COUNTESS (*looks on him mournfully, then grasps his hand*).
What art thou brooding on ?

WÄLLENSTEIN.

Methinks,
If I but saw him, 'twould be well with me.
He is the star of my nativity,
And often marvellously hath his aspect
Shot strength into my heart.

COUNTESS.

Thou'l see him again.

WÄLLENSTEIN (*remains for a while with absent mind, then assumes a livelier manner, and turning suddenly to the Countess*).
See him again ? O never, never again !

- These four lines are expressed in the original with exquisite felicity.

Am Himmel ist geschäftige Bewegung.
Des Thurmes Fahne jagt der Wind, schnell geht
Der Wolken Zug, die *Mondessichel wankt*,
Und durch die Nacht zuckt ungewisse Helle.

The word "moon-sickle," reminds me of a passage in Harris, as quoted by Johnson, under the word "falcated." "The enlightened part of the moon appears in the form of a sickle or reaping-hook, which is while she is moving from the conjunction to the opposition, or from the new moon to the full : but from full to a new again, the enlightened part appears gibbous, and the dark *falcated*."

The words "wanken" and "schweben" are not easily translated. The English words, by which we attempt to render them, are either vulgar or pedantic, or not of sufficiently general application. So "der Wolken Zug"—The Draft, the Procession of clouds.—The Masses of the Clouds sweep onward in swift stream.

COUNTESS.

How?

WALLENSTEIN.

He is gone—is dust.

COUNTESS.

Whom meanest thou, then?

WALLENSTEIN.

He, the more fortunate! yea, he hath finish'd!
For him there is no longer any future,
His life is bright—bright without spot it was,
And cannot cease to be. No ominous hour
Knocks at his door with tidings of mishap,
Far off is he, above desire and fear;
No more submitted to the change and chance
Of the unsteady planets. O 'tis well
With *him*! but who knows what the coming hour
Veil'd in thick darkness brings for us?

COUNTESS.

Thou speakest

Of Piccolomini. What was his death?
The courier had just left thee as I came.

[*WALLENSTEIN by a motion of his hand makes signs to her to be silent.*

Turn not thine eyes upon the backward view,
Let us look forward into sunny days,
Welcome with joyous heart the victory,
Forget what it has cost thee. Not to-day.
For the first time, thy friend was to thee dead;
To thee he died, when first he parted from thee.

WALLENSTEIN.

This anguish will be wearied down*, I know;
What pang is permanent with man? From the highest,
As from the vilest thing of every day,
He learns to wean himself: for the strong hours

* A very inadequate translation of the original:—

Verschmerzen werd' ich diesen Schlag, das weiss ich,
Denn was verschmerzte nicht der Mensch!

LITERALLY.

I shall grieve down this blow, of that I'm conscious:
What does not man grieve down?

Conquer him. Yet I feel what I have lost
 In him. The bloom is vanish'd from my life.
 For O ! he stood beside me, like my youth,
 Transform'd for me the real to a dream,
 Clothing the palpable and the familiar
 With golden exhalations of the dawn.
 Whatever fortunes wait my future toils,
 The *beautiful* is vanish'd—and returns not.

COUNTESS.

O be not treacherous to thy own power.
 Thy heart is rich enough to vivify
 Itself. Thou lovest and prizest virtues in him,
 The which thyself didst plant, thyself unfold.

WALLENSTEIN (*stepping to the door*).

Who interrupts us now at this late hour ?
 It is the Governor. He brings the keys
 Of the Citadel. 'Tis midnight. Leave me, sister !

COUNTESS.

O 'tis so hard to me this night to leave thee—
 A boding fear possesses me !

WALLENSTEIN.

Fear ! Wherefore ?

COUNTESS.

Shouldst thou depart this night, and we at waking
 Never more find thee !

WALLENSTEIN.

Fancies !

COUNTESS.

O my soul
 Has long been weigh'd down by these dark forebodings.
 And if I combat and repel them waking,
 They still crush down upon my heart in dreams.
 I saw thee yesternight with thy first wife
 Sit at a banquet, gorgeously attired.

WALLENSTEIN.

This was a dream of favourable omen,
 That marriage being the founder of my fortunes.

COUNTESS.

To-day I dreamt that I was seeking thee
 In thy own chamber. As I enter'd, lo !

It was no more a chamber : the Chartreuse.
 At Gitschin 'twas, which thou thyself hast founded,
 And where it is thy will that thou shouldst be.
 Interr'd.

WALLENSTEIN.

Thy soul is busy with these thoughts.

COUNTESS.

What ! dost thou not believe that oft in dreams
 A voice of warning speaks prophetic to us ?

WALLENSTEIN.

There is no doubt that there exist such voices.
 Yet I would not call *them*
 Voices of warning that announce to us
 Only the inevitable. As the sun,
 Ere it is risen, sometimes paints its image
 In the atmosphere, so often do the spirits
 Of great events stride on before the events,
 And in to-day already walks to-morrow.
 That which we read of the fourth Henry's death
 Did ever vex and haunt me like a tale
 Of my own future destiny. The king
 Felt in his breast the phantom of the knife,
 Long ere Ravaillac arm'd himself therewith.
 His quiet mind forsook him : the phantasma
 Started him in his Louvre, chased him forth
 Into the open air : like funeral knells
 Sounded that coronation festival ;
 And still with boding sense he heard the tread
 Of those feet that even then were seeking him
 Throughout the streets of Paris.

COUNTESS.

And to *thee*

The voice within thy soul bodes nothing ?

WALLENSTEIN.

Nothing.

Be wholly tranquil.

COUNTESS.

And another time

I hasten'd after thee, and thou rann'st from me
 Through a long suite, through many a spacious hall,
 There seem'd no end of it : doors creak'd and clapp'd ;

I follow'd panting, but could not o'ertake thee;
 When on a sudden did I feel myself
 Grasp'd from behind—the hand was cold that grasped me—
 'Twas thou, and thou didst kiss me, and there seem'd
 A crimson covering to envelop us.

WALLENSTEIN.

That is the crimson tapestry of my chamber.

COUNTESS (*gazing on him*).

If it should come to that—if I should see thee,
 Who standest now before me in the fulness
 Of life— [She falls on his breast and weeps.]

WALLENSTEIN.

The Emperor's proclamation weighs upon thee—
 Alphabets wound not—and he finds no hands.

COUNTESS.

If he should find them, my resolve is taken—
 I bear about me my support and refuge.

[Exit COUNTESS.]

SCENE IV.

WALLENSTEIN, GORDON.

WALLENSTEIN.

All quiet in the town?

GORDON.

The town is quiet.

WALLENSTEIN.

I hear a boisterous music! and the Castle
 Is lighted up. Who are the revellers?

GORDON.

There is a banquet given at the Castle
 To the Count Terzky, and Field Marshal Illo.

WALLENSTEIN

In honour of the victory—This tribe
 Can show their joy in nothing else but feasting.

[Rings. The GROOM OF THE CHAMBER enters.
 Unrobe me. I will lay me down to sleep.

[WALLENSTEIN takes the keys from GORDON.
 So we are guarded from all enemies,
 And shut in with sure friends.

For all must cheat me, or a face like this
 Was ne'er a hypocrite's mask.

[*The GROOM OF THE CHAMBER takes off his mantle, collar, and scarf.*

WELLENSTEIN.

Take care—what is that?

GROOM OF THE CHAMBER.

The golden chain is snapped in two.

WELLENSTEIN.

Well, it has lasted long enough. Here—give it.

Twas the first present of the Emperor.
[He takes and looks at the chain.

He hung it round me in the war of Friule,
 He being then Archduke ; and I have worn it
 Till now from habit—

From superstition, if you will. Belike,
 It was to be a talisman to me ;
 And while I wore it on my neck in faith,
 It was to chain to me all my life long
 The volatile fortune, whose first pledge it was.
 Well, be it so ! Henceforward a new fortune
 Must spring up for me ; for the potency
 Of this charm is dissolved.

[*GROOM OF THE CHAMBER retires with the vestments.*

WELLENSTEIN rises, takes a stride across the room,
and stands at last before GORDON in a posture of
meditation.

How the old time returns upon me ! I
 Behold myself once more at Burgau, where
 We two were Pages of the Court together.
 We oftentimes disputed : thy intention
 Was ever good ; but thou wert wont to play
 The Moralist and Preacher, and wouldest rail at me—
 That I strove after things too high for me,
 Giving my faith to bold unlawful dreams,
 And still extol to me the golden mean.—
 Thy wisdom hath been proved a thriftless friend
 To thy own self. See, it has made thee early
 A superannuated man, and (but

That my munificent stars will intervene)
Would let thee in some miserable corner
Go out like an untended lamp.

GORDON.

My Prince !
With light heart the poor fisher moors his boat,
And watches from the shore the lofty ship,
Stranded amid the storm.

WALLENSTEIN.

Art thou already
In harbour then, old man ? Well ! I am not.
The unconquer'd spirit drives me o'er life's billows ;
My planks still firm, my canvas swelling proudly.
Hope is my goddess still, and Youth my inmate ;
And while we stand thus front to front almost
I might presume to say, that the swift years
Have passed by powerless o'er my unblanched hair.

[He moves with long strides across the Saloon, and remains on the opposite side over against GORDON.]

Who now persists in calling Fortune false ?
To me she has proved faithful ; with fond love
Took me from out the common ranks of men,
And like a mother goddess, with strong arm
Carried me swiftly up the steps of life.
Nothing is common in my destiny,
Nor in the furrows of my hand. Who dares
Interpret then my life for me as 'twere
One of the undistinguishable many ?
True, in this present moment I appear
Fallen low indeed ; but I shall rise again.
The high flood will soon follow on this ebb ;
The fountain of my fortune, which now stops
Repress'd and bound by some malicious star,
Will soon in joy play forth from all its pipes.

GORDON.

And yet remember I the good old proverb,
" Let the night come before we praise the day."
I would be slow from long-continued fortune
To gather hope : for Hope is the companion
Given to the unfortunate by pitying Heaven.

Fear hovers round the head of prosperous men :
For still unsteady are the scales of fate.

WALLENSTEIN (*smiling*).

I hear the very Gordon that of old
Was wont to preach, now once more preaching ;
 know well, that all sublunary things
Are still the vassals of vicissitude.
The unpropitious gods demand their tribute
This long ago the ancient Pagans knew :
And therefore of their own accord they offer'd
To themselves injuries, so to atone
The jealousy of their divinities :
And human sacrifices bled to Typhon.

[*After a pause, serious, and in a more subdued manner.*
I too have sacrificed to him—For me
There fell the dearest friend, and through my fault
He fell ! No joy from favourable fortune
Can outweigh the anguish of this stroke.
The envy of my destiny is glutted :
Life pays for life. On his pure head the lightning
Was drawn off which would else have shatter'd me.

SCENE V.

To these enter SENI.

WALLENSTEIN.

Is not that Seni ! and beside himself,
If one may trust his looks ? What brings thee hither
At this late hour, Baptista ?

SENI.

Terror, Duke !

On thy account.

WALLENSTEIN.

What now ?

SENI.

Flee ere the day-break !
Trust not thy person to the Swedes !

WALLENSTEIN.

What now

Is in thy thoughts ?

SENI (*with louder voice*).

Trust not thy person to the Swedes.

WALLENSTEIN.

What is it, then?

SENI (*still more urgently*).

O wait not the arrival of these Swedes !
An evil near at hand is threatening thee
From false friends. All the signs stand full of horror !
Near, near at hand the net-work of perdition—
Yea, even now 'tis being cast around thee !

WALLENSTEIN.

Baptista, thou art dreaming !—Fear befools thee

SENI.

Believe not that an empty fear deludes me.
Come, read it in the planetary aspects ;
Read it thyself, that ruin threatens thee
From false friends.

WALLENSTEIN.

From the falseness of my friends
Has risen the whole of my unprosperous fortunes.
The warning should have come before ! At present
I need no revelation from the stars
To know that.

SENI.

Come and see ! trust thine own eyes !
A fearful sign stands in the house of life—
An enemy ; a fiend lurks close behind
The radiance of thy planet.—O be warn'd !
Deliver not up thyself to these heathens,
To wage a war against our holy church.

WALLENSTEIN (*laughing gently*).

The oracie rails that way ! Yes, yes ! Now
I recollect. This junction with the Swedes
Did never please thee—lay thyself to sleep,
Baptista ! Signs like these I do not fear.

GORDON (*who during the whole of this dialogue has shown marks
of extreme agitation, and now turns to WALLENSTEIN*).
My Duke and General ! May I dare presume ?

WALLENSTEIN.

Speak freely.

GORDON.

What if 'twere no mere creation
 Of fear, if God's high providence vouchsafed
 To interpose its aid for your deliverance,
 And made that mouth its organ?

WALLENSTEIN.

Ye're both feverish!
 How can mishap come to me from the Swedes?
 They sought this junction with me—'tis their interest.

GORDON (*with difficulty suppressing his emotion*).
 But what if the arrival of these Swedes—
 What if this were the very thing that wing'd
 The ruin that is flying to your temples?
 [Flings himself at his feet.
 There is yet time, my Prince.

SENI.

O hear him! hear him!

GORDON (*rises*).

The Rhinegrave's still far off. Give but the orders,
 This citadel shall close its gates upon him.
 If then he will besiege us, let him try it.
 But this I say; he'll find his own destruction
 With his whole force before these ramparts, sooner
 Than weary down the valour of our spirit.
 He shall experience what a band of heroes,
 Inspired by an heroic leader,
 Is able to perform. And if indeed
 It be thy serious wish to make amend
 For that which thou hast done amiss,—this, this
 Will touch and reconcile the Emperor,
 Who gladly turns his heart to thoughts of mercy;
 And Friedland, who returns repentant to him,
 Will stand yet higher in his Emperor's favour,
 Than e'er he stood when he had never fallen.

WALLENSTEIN (*contemplates him with surprise, remains silent awhile, betraying strong emotion*).

Gordon—your zeal and fervour lead you far.
 Well, well—an old friend has a privilege.
 Blood, Gordon, has been flowing. Never, never
 Can the Emperor pardon me: and if he could,

Yet I—I ne'er could let myself be pardon'd.
 Had I foreknown what now has taken place,
 That he, my dearest friend, would fail for me,
 My first death-offering; and had the heart
 Spoken to me, as now it has done—Gordon,
 It may be, I might have bethought myself.
 It may be too, I might not. Might or might not,
 Is now an idle question. All too seriously
 Has it begun to end in nothing, Gordon!
 Let it then have its course. [Stepping to the window.
 All dark and silent—at the castle too
 All is now hush'd—Light me, Chamberlain!

[*The GROOM OF THE CHAMBER, who had entered during the last dialogue, and had been standing at a distance and listening to it with visible expressions of the deepest interest, advances in extreme agitation, and throws himself at the DUKE's feet.*

And thou too! But I know why thou dost wish
 My reconciliation with the Emperor.
 Poor man! he hath a small estate in Carinthia,
 And fears it will be forfeited because
 He's in my service. Am I then so poor
 That I no longer can indemnify
 My servants? Well! to no one I employ
 Means of compulsion. If 'tis thy belief
 That fortune has fled from me, go! forsake me.
 This night for the last time mayst thou unrobe me,
 And then go over to thy Emperor.
 Gordon, good night! I think to make a long
 Sleep of it: for the struggle and the turmoil
 Of this last day or two was great. May't please you!
 Take care that they awake me not too early.

[*Exit WALLENSTEIN, the GROOM OF THE CHAMBER lighting him. SENI follows, GORDON remains on the darkened stage, following the DUKE with his eye, till he disappears at the farther end of the gallery: then by his gestures the old man expresses the depth of his anguish and stands leaning against a pillar.*

SCENE VI.

GORDON, BUTLER (*at first behind the scenes*).

BUTLER (*not yet come into view of the stage*).
Here stand in silence till I give the signal.

GORDON (*starts up*).

"Tis he ! he has already brought the murderers.

BUTLER,
The lights are out. All lies in profound sleep.

GORDON.

What shall I do, shall I attempt to save him ?
Shall I call up the house ? alarm the guards ?

BUTLER (*appears, but scarcely on the stage*).
A light gleams hither from the corridor.
It leads directly to the Duke's bed-chamber.

GORDON.

But then I break my oath to the Emperor ;
If he escape and strengthen the enemy,
Do I not hereby call down on my head
All the dread consequences ?

BUTLER (*stepping forward*).
Hark ! Who speaks there ?

GORDON.

"Tis better, I resign it to the hands
Of Providence. For what am I, that *I*
Should take upon myself so great a deed ?
I have not murdered him, if he be murder'd ;
But all his rescue were *my* act and deed ;
Mine—and whatever be the consequences,
I must sustain them.

BUTLER (*advances*).

I should know that voice.

GORDON.

Butler !

BUTLER

"Tis Gordon. What do *you* want here ?
Was it so late then, when the Duke dismiss'd you ?

GORDON.

Your hand bound up and in a scarf ?

BUTLER.

'Tis wounded.

That Illo fought as he were frantic, till
At last we threw him on the ground.

GORDON (*shuddering*).

Both dead?

BUTLER.

Is he in bed?

GORDON.

Ah, Butler!

BUTLER.

Is he? speak.

GORDON.

He shall *not* perish! Not through you! The Heaven
Refuses *your* arm. See—'tis wounded:—

BUTLER.

There is no need of *my* arm.

GORDON.

The most guilty

Have perish'd, and enough is given to justice.

*[The GROOM OF THE CHAMBER advances from the
Gallery with his finger on his mouth commanding
silence.]*

GORDON.

He sleeps! O murder not the holy sleep!

BUTLER.

No! he shall die awake.

[*Is going.*]

GORDON.

His heart still cleaves
To earthly things: he's not prepared to step
Into the presence of his God!

BUTLER (*going*).

God's merciful!

GORDON (*holds him*).

Grant him but this night's respite.

BUTLER (*hurrying off*).

The next moment

May ruin all.

GORDON (*holds him still*).

One hour! —

BUTLER.

Unhold me! What

Can that short respite profit him?

GORDON.

O—Time

Works miracles. In one hour many thousands
Of grains of sand run out; and quick as they,
Thought follows thought within the human soul.
Only one hour! Your heart may change its purpose,
His heart may change its purpose—some new tidings
May come; some fortunate event, decisive,
May fall from Heaven and rescue him. O what
May not one hour achieve!

BUTLER.

You but remind me,
How precious every minute is!

[*He stamps on the floor.*

SCENE VII.

To these enter MACDONALD and DEVEREUX, with the HALBERDIERS.

GORDON (*throwing himself between them and them*).

No, monster!

First over my dead body thou shalt tread.

I will not live to see the accursed deed!

BUTLER (*forcing him out of the way*).

Weak-hearted dotard!

[*Trumpets are heard in the distance.*

DEVEREUX and MACDONALD.

Hark! The Swedish trumpets!

The Swedes before the ramparts! Let us hasten!

GORDON (*rushes out*).

O, God of mercy!

BUTLER (*calling after him*).

Governor, to your post!

GROOM OF THE CHAMBER (*hurries in*).

Who dares make larum here? Hush! The Duke sleeps.

DEVEREUX (*with loud harsh voice*).

Friend, it is time now to make larum.

GROOM OF THE CHAMBER.

Help!

Murder!

BUTLER.

Down with him!

GROOM OF THE CHAMBER (*run through the body by DEVEREUX, falls at the entrance of the Gallery*).

Jesus Maria

BUTLER

Burst the doors open.

[*They rush over the body into the Gallery—two doors are heard to crash one after the other.—Voices, deadened by the distance—clash of arms—then all at once a profound silence.*

SCENE VIII.

COUNTESS TERZKY (*with a light*).

Her bed-chamber is empty ; she herself
Is nowhere to be found ! The Neubrunn too,
Who watch'd by her, is missing. If she should
Be flown — but whither flown ? We must call up
Every soul in the house. How will the Duke
Bear up against these worst bad tidings ? O
If that my husband now were but return'd
Home from the banquet !—Hark ! I wonder whether
The Duke is still awake ! I thought I heard
Voices and tread of feet here ! I will go
And listen at the door. Hark ! what is that ?
'Tis hastening up the steps !

SCENE IX

COUNTESS, GORDON.

GORDON (*rushes in out of breath*).

'Tis a mistake !

'Tis not the Swedes—We must proceed no further—
Butler !—O God ! where is he ?

GORDON (*observing the Countess*).
Countess! Say—

COUNTESS.

You are come then from the castle? Where's my husband?

GORDON (*in an agony of affright*).
Your husband!—Ask not!—To the Duke—

COUNTESS.

Not till

You have discover'd to me—

GORDON.

On this moment

Does the world hang. For God's sake! to the Duke.
While we are speaking— [Calling loudly.
Butler! Butler! God!

COUNTESS.

Why, he is at the castle with my husband.

[BUTLER comes from the Gallery.

GORDON.

'Twas a mistake—'Tis not the Swedes—it is
The Imperialists' Lieutenant-General
Has sent me hither—will be here himself
Instantly.—You must not proceed.

BUTLER.

He comes

Too late. [GORDON dashes himself against the wall.

GORDON.

O God of mercy!

COUNTESS.

What too late?

Who will be here himself? Octavio
In Egra? Treason! Treason!—Where's the Duke?
[She rushes to the Gallery.

SCENE X.

(Servants run across the Stage full of terror. The whole Scene
must be spoken entirely without pauses).

SENI (*from the Gallery*).
O bloody frightful deed!

COUNTESS.

What is it, Seni?

PAGE (*from the Gallery*).

O piteous sight!

[*Other Servants hasten in with torches.*

COUNTESS.

What is it? For God's sake!

SENI.

And do you ask?

Within, the Duke lies murder'd—and your husband
Assassinated at the Castle.

[*The Countess stands motionless.*

FEMALE SERVANT (*rushing across the Stage*).

Help! help! the Duchess!

BURGOMASTER (*enters*).

What mean these confused

Loud cries, that wake the sleepers of this house?

GORDON.

Your house is cursed to all eternity.

In your house doth the Duke lie murder'd!

BURGOMASTER (*rushing out*).

Heaven forbid!

FIRST SERVANT.

Fly! fly! they murder us all!

SECOND SERVANT (*carrying silver plate*).

That way! the lower

Passages are block'd up.

VOICE (*from behind the Scene*).

Make room for the Lieutenant-General!

[*At these words the Countess starts from her stupor, collects herself, and retires suddenly.*

VOICE (*from behind the Scene*).

Keep back the people! Guard the door!

SCENE XI.

To these enter OCTAVIO PICCOLOMINI with all his train. At the same time DEVEREUX and MACDONALD enter from out the Corridor with the Halberdiers.—WALLENSTEIN'S dead body is carried over the back part of the Stage, wrapped in a piece of crimson tapestry.

OCTAVIO (*entering abruptly*).

It must not be! It is not possible!

Butler! Gordon!

I'll not believe it. Say no!

[GORDON, without answering, points with his hand to the body of WALLENSTEIN as it is carried over the back of the stage. OCTAVIO looks that way, and stands over-powered with horror.

DEVEREUX (*to BUTLER*).

Here is the golden fleece—the Duke's sword—

MACDONALD.

Is it your order—

BUTLER (*pointing to OCTAVIO*).

Here stands he who now

Hath the sole power to issue orders.

[DEVEREUX and MACDONALD retire with marks of obeisance. One drops away after the other, till only BUTLER, OCTAVIO, and GORDON, remain on the Stage.

OCTAVIO (*turning to BUTLER*).

Was that my purpose, Butler, when we parted?

O God of Justice!

To thee I lift my hand! I am not guilty
Of this foul deed.

BUTLER.

Your hand is pure. You have
Avail'd yourself of mine.

OCTAVIO.

Merciless man!

Thus to abuse the orders of thy Lord—
And stain thy Emperor's holy name with murder,
With bloody, most accursed assassination!

BUTLER (*calmly*).

I've but fulfilled the Emperor's own sentence.

OCTAVIO.

O curse of Kings,
Infusing a dread life into their words,
And linking to the sudden transient thought
The unchanging irrevocable deed.
Was there necessity for such an eager
Despatch? Couldst thou not grant the merciful
A time for mercy? Time is man's good Angel.

To leave no interval between the sentence,
And the fulfilment of it, doth beseem
God only, the immutable !

BUTLER.

For what

Rail you against me? What is my offence ?
The Empire from a fearful enemy
Have I deliver'd, and expect reward.
The single difference betwixt you and me
Is this : you placed the arrow in the bow ;
I pull'd the string. You sow'd blood, and yet stand
Astonish'd that blood is come up. I always
Knew what I did, and therefore no result
Hath power to frighten or surprise my spirit.
Have you aught else to order ; for this instant
I make my best speed to Vienna ; place
My bleeding sword before my Emperor's throne,
And hope to gain the applause which undelaying
And punctual obedience may demand
From a just judge.

[Exit BUTLER.]

SCENE XII.

*To these enter the COUNTESS TERZKY, pale and disordered
Her utterance is slow and feeble, and unimpassioned.*

OCTAVIO (*meeting her*).

O, Countess Terzky! These are the results
Of luckless unblest deeds.

COUNTESS.

They are the fruits
Of your contrivances. The Duke is dead,
My husband too is dead, the Duchess struggles
In the pangs of death, my niece has disappear'd.
This house of splendour, and of princely glory,
Doth now stand desolated : the affrighted servants
Rush forth through all its doors. I am the last
Therein ; I shut it up, and here deliver
The keys.

OCTAVIO (*with a deep anguish*).

O Countess! my house, too, is desolate.

COUNTESS.

Who next is to be murder'd? Who is next
 To be maltreated? Lo! the Duke is dead,
 The Emperor's vengeance may be pacified!
 Spare the old servants; let not their fidelity
 Be imputed to the faithful as a crime—
 The evil destiny surprised my brother
 Too suddenly: he could not think on them.

OCTAVIO.

Speak not of vengeance! Speak not of maltreatment!
 The Emperor is appeased; the heavy fault
 Hath heavily been expiated—nothing
 Descended from the father to the daughter,
 Except his glory and his services.
 The Empress honours your adversity,
 Takes part in your afflictions, opens to you
 Her motherly arms! Therefore no farther fears;
 Yield yourself up in hope and confidence
 To the Imperial Grace!

COUNTESS (*with her eye raised to heaven*).

To the grace and mercy of a greater Master
 Do I yield up myself. Where shall the body
 Of the Duke have its place of final rest?
 In the Chartreuse, which he himself did found
 At Gitschin, rests the Countess Wallenstein;
 And by her side, to whom he was indebted
 For his first fortunes, gratefully he wish'd
 He might sometime repose in death! O let him
 Be buried there. And likewise, for my husband's
 Remains, I ask the like grace. The Emperor
 Is now the proprietor of all our castles.
 This sure may well be granted us—one sepulchre
 Beside the sepulchres of our forefathers!

OCTAVIO.

Countess, you tremble, you turn pale!

COUNTESS (*reassembles all her powers, and speaks with energy
 and dignity*)

You think

More worthily of me, than to believe
 I would survive the downfall of my house.

We did not hold ourselves too mean to grasp
After a monarch's crown—the crown did fate
Deny, but not the feeling and the spirit
That to the crown belong! We deem a
Courageous death more worthy of our free station
Than a dishonour'd life.—I have taken poison.

OCTAVIO.

Help! Help! Support her!

COUNTESS.

Nay, it is too late.
In a few moments is my fate accomplish'd.

[Exit COUNTESS.

GORDON.

O house of death and horrors!

[An OFFICER enters, and brings a letter with the great seal.
GORDON steps forward and meets him.

What is this?

It is the Imperial Seal.

[He reads the address, and delivers the letter to OCTAVIO
with a look of reproach, and with an emphasis on the
word.

To the Prince Piccolomini.

[OCTAVIO, with his whole frame expressive of sudden
anguish, raises his eyes to heaven.

The Curtain drops.

END OF THE DEATH OF WALLENSTEIN.

WILHELM TELL.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

HERMANN GESSLER, <i>Governor of</i>		SESSI, <i>Herdsmen's son.</i>
<i>Switz and Uri.</i>		GENTRUDE, <i>Staufacher's wife.</i>
WERNER, <i>Baron of Attinghausen,</i>		HEDWIG, <i>wife of Tell, daughter of</i>
<i>free noble of Switzerland.</i>		<i>Fürst.</i>
ULRICH VON RUDENZ, <i>his Nephew.</i>		BERTHA OF BRUNECK, <i>a rich heiress.</i>
WERNER STAUFFACHER,	People of Schwytz.	ARMGART,
CONRAD HUNN,		MECHTHILD,
HANS AUF DER MAUER,		ELSBETH,
JORG IM HOFE,		HILDEGARD,
ULRICH DER SCHMIDT,		WALTER,
JOST VON WEILER,		WILHELM,
ITEL REDING,		FRIESSHARDT,
WALTER FURST,		LEUTHOLD,
WILHELM TELL,		RUDOLPH DER HARRAS, <i>Gessler's</i>
RÖSSELMANN, <i>The Priest,</i>		<i>master of the horse.</i>
PETERMANN, <i>Sacristan,</i>	JOHANNES PARICIDA, <i>Duke of Sua-</i>	
KUONI, <i>Herdsmen,</i>	<i>bia.</i>	
WEINI, <i>Huntsman,</i>	STUSSI, <i>Overseer.</i>	
RUODI, <i>Fisherman,</i>	THE MAYOR OF URL.	
ARNOLD OF MELCHTHAL,	A COURIER.	
CONRAD BAUMGARTEN,	MASTER STONEMASON, <i>COMPANIONE,</i>	
MEYER VON SARREN,	<i>AND WORKMEN.</i>	
STRUTH VON WINKELRIED,	TASKMASTER.	
KLAUS VON DER FLUE,	A CRIER.	
BURKHART AM BUEHL,	MONKS OF THE ORDER OF CHARITY.	
ARNOLD VON SEWA,	HORSEMEN OF GESSLER AND LANDEN-	
PFEIFFER OF LUCERNE.	BERG.	
KUNZ OF GEBSAU.	MANY PEASANTS; <i>Men and Women</i>	
JENNI, <i>Fisherman's son.</i>	<i>FROM THE WALDSTETTER.</i>	

ACT I.

SCENE I.

A high rocky shore of the lake of Lucerne opposite Schwytz. The lake makes a bend into the land; a hut stands at a short distance from the shore; the fisher boy is rowing about in his boat. Beyond the lake are seen the green meadows, the hamlets and farms of Schwytz, lying in the clear sunshine. On the left are observed the peaks of the Haken, surrounded with clouds; to the right, and in the remote distance, appear the Glaciers. The Ranz des Vaches, and the tinkling of cattle bells, continue for some time after the rising of the curtain.

FISHER BOY (*sings in his boat*).

Melody of the Ranz des Vaches.

The clear smiling lake woo'd to bathe in its deep,
A boy on its green shore had laid him to sleep;

Then heard he a melody
Flowing and soft,
And sweet, as when angels
Are singing aloft.

And as thrilling with pleasure he wakes from his rest,
The waters are murmuring over his breast;

And a voice from the deep cries,
"With me thou must go,
I charm the young shepherd,
I lure him below."

HERDSMAN (*on the mountains*).

Air.—Variation of the Ranz des Vaches.

Farewell, ye green meadows,
Farewell, sunny shore,
The herdsman must leave you,
The summer is o'er.

We go to the hills, but you'll see us again,

When the cuckoo is calling, and woodnotes are gay,
When flow'rets are blooming in dingle and plain,
And the brooks sparkle up in the sunshine of May.

Farewell, ye green meadows,
Farewell, sunny shore,
The herdsman must leave you,
The summer is o'er.

CHAMOIS HUNTER (*appearing on the top of a cliff*).

Second Variation of the Ranz des Vaches.

On the heights peals the thunder, and trembles the bridge,
The huntsman bounds on by the dizzying ridge.

Undaunted he hies him
O'er ice-covered wild,
Where leaf never budded,
Nor Spring ever smiled ;
And beneath him an ocean of mist, where his eye
No longer the dwellings of man can espy ;
Through the parting clouds only
The earth can be seen,
Far down 'neath the vapour
The meadows of green.

[A change comes over the landscape. A rumbling, cracking noise is heard among the mountains. Shadows of clouds sweep across the scene.

[RUODI, the fisherman, comes out of his cottage. WERNI, the huntsman, descends from the rocks. KUONI, the shepherd, enters, with a milkpail on his shoulders, followed by SESSI, his assistant.

RUODI. Bestir thee, Jenni, haul the boat on shore.
The grizzly Vale-King* comes, the Glaciers moan,
The lofty Mythenstein† draws on his hood,
And from the Stormcleft chilly blows the wind ;
The storm will burst, before we are prepared.

KUONI. Twill rain ere long ; my sheep browse eagerly,
And Watcher there is scraping up the earth.

WERNI. The fish are leaping, and the water-hen
Dives up and down. A storm is coming on

KUONI (*to his boy*).

Look, Seppi, if the cattle are not straying.

SESSI. There goes brown Liesel, I can hear her bells.

KUONI. Then all are safe ; she ever ranges farthest.

RUODI. You've a fine yoke of bells there, master herdsmen.

WERNI. And likely cattle, too. Are they your own ?

* The German is, Thalvogt, Ruler of the Valley—the name given figuratively to a dense grey mist which the south wind sweeps into the valleys from the mountain-tops. It is well known as the precursor of stormy weather.

† A steep rock, standing on the north of Bühl, and nearly opposite to Brünen,

KUONI. I'm not so rich. They are the noble lord's
Of Attinghaus, and trusted to my care.

RUODI. How gracefully yon heifer bears her ribbon!

KUONI. Ay, well she knows she's leader of the herd,
And, take it from her, she'd refuse to feed.

RUODI. You're joking now. A beast devoid of reason—

WERNI. That's easy said. But beasts have reason, too,—
And that we know, we men that hunt the chamois :
They never turn to feed—sagacious creatures !
Till they have placed a sentinel ahead,
Who pricks his ears whenever we approach,
And gives alarm with clear and piercing pipe.

RUODI (*to the shepherd*).

Are you for home ?

KUONI. The Alp is grazed quite bare.

WERNI. A safe return, my friend !

KUONI. The same to you !

Men come not always back from tracks like yours.

RUODI. But who comes here, running at topmost speed ?

WERNI. I know the man ; 'tis Baumgarten of Alzellen.

KONRAD BAUMGARTEN (*rushing in breathless*).

For God's sake, ferryman, your boat !

RUODI. How now ?

Why all this haste ?

BAUM. Cast off ! My life's at stake !

Set me across !

KUONI. Why, what's the matter, friend ?

WERNI. Who are pursuing you ? First tell us that.

BAUM. (*to the fisherman*).

Quick, quick, e'en now they're close upon my heels !

The Viceroy's horsemen are in hot pursuit !

I'm a lost man, should they lay hands upon me.

RUODI. Why are the troopers in pursuit of you ?

BAUM. First save my life, and then I'll tell you all.

WERNI. There's blood upon your garments—how is this ?

BAUM. The imperial Seneschal, who dwelt at Roasberg—

KUONI. How ! What ! The Wolfshoet* ? Is it he pursues you ?

* In German, *Wolfshoet*—a young man of noble family, and a native of Unterwalden, who attached himself to the House of Austria, and was appointed *Burgecht*, or *Seneschal*, of the Castle of Rossberg. He was killed by Baumgarten in the manner, and for the cause, mentioned in the text.

BAUM. He'll ne'er hurt man again ; I've settled him.
 ALL (*starting back*). Now, God forgive you, what is this you've done !

BAUM. What every free man in my place had done.
 I have but used mine own good household right
 'Gainst him that would have wrong'd my wife—my honour.

KUONI. And has he wrong'd you in your honour, then ?

BAUM. That he did not fulfil his foul desire,
 Is due to God and to my trusty axe.

WERNI. You've cleft his skull then, have you, with your axe ?

KUONI. O, tell us all ! You've time enough, before
 The boat can be unfastened from its moorings.

BAUM. When I was in the forest felling timber,
 My wife came running out in mortal fear.
 "The Seneschal," she said, "was in my house,
 Had order'd her to get a bath prepared,
 And thereupon had ta'en unseemly freedoms,
 From which she rid herself, and flew to me."
 Arm'd as I was, I sought him, and my axe
 Has given his bath a bloody benediction.

WERNI. And you did well ; no man can blame the deed.

KUONI. The tyrant ! Now he has his just reward !
 We men of Unterwald have owed it long.

BAUM. The deed got wind, and now they're in pursuit.
 Heavens ! whilst we speak, the time is flying fast.

[*It begins to thunder.*

KUONI. Quick, ferryman, and set the good man over.

RUDI. Impossible ! a storm is close at hand,
 Wait till it pass ! You must.

BAUM. Almighty heavens !
 I cannot wait ; the least delay is death.

KUONI (*to the fisherman*). Push out—God with you ! We should help our neighbours ;
 The like misfortune may betide us all.

[*Thunder and the roaring of the wind.*

RUDI. The South-wind's up * ! See how the lake is rising !
 I cannot steer against both storm and wave.

* Literally, The Föhn is loose : "When," says Müller, in his History of Switzerland, "the wind called the Föhn is high, the navigation of the lake

BAUM. (*clasping him by the knees*).

God so help you, as now you pity me!

WERNI. His life's at stake. Have pity on him, man!

KUONI. He is a father: has a wife and children.

[*Repeated peals of thunder.*]

RUODI. What! and have I not, then, a life to lose,
A wife and child at home as well as he?
See, how the breakers foam, and toss, and whirl,
And the lake eddies up from all its depths!
Right gladly would I save the worthy man,
But 'tis impossible, as you must see.

BAUM. (*still kneeling*).

Then must I fall into the tyrant's hands,
And with the port of safety close in sight!
Yonder it lies! My eyes can measure it,
My very voice can echo to its shores.
There is the boat to carry me across,
Yet must I lie here helpless and forlorn.

KUONI. Look! who comes here?

RUODI. 'Tis Tell, brave Tell, of Bürglen*.

[Enter TELL with a crossbow.]

TELL. Who is the man that here implores for aid?

KUONI. He is from Alzellen, and to guard his honour
From touch of foulest shame, has slain the Wolfshot,
The Imperial Seneschal, who dwelt at Rossberg.
The Viceroy's troopers are upon his heels;
He begs the boatman here to take him over.
But he, in terror of the storm, refuses.

RUODI. Well, there is Tell can steer as well as I,
He'll be my judge, if it be possible.

[*Violent peals of thunder—the lake becomes more tempestuous.*

Am I to plunge into the jaws of hell?
I should be mad to dare the desperate act.

TELL. The brave man thinks upon himself the last.
Put trust in God, and help him in his need!

Such is its vehemence, that the laws of the
country require that the fire shall be extinguished in the houses while it
lasts, and the night watchmen are doubled. The inhabitants lay heavy stones
upon the roofs of their houses, to prevent their being blown away."

* Bürglen, the birthplace and residence of Tell. A chapel, erected in
1532, remains on the spot formerly occupied by his house.

RUODI. Safe in the port, 'tis easy to advise.
There is the boat, and there the lake! Try you!

TELL. The lake may pity, but the Viceroy will not.
Come, try it, man!

SHEPHERD and HUNTSMAN.

O save him! save him! save him!

RUODI. Though 'twere my brother, or my darling child,
I would not go. It is St. Simon's day.
The lake is up, and calling for its victim.

TELL. Nought's to be done with idle talking here.
Time presses on—the man must be assisted.
Say, boatman; will you venture?

RUODI. No; not I.

TELL. In God's name, then, give me the boat! I will,
With my poor strength, see what is to be done!

KUONI. Ha, noble Tell!

WERNI. That's like a gallant huntsman!

BAUM. You are my angel, my preserver, Tell.

TELL. I may preserve you from the Viceroy's power,
But from the tempest's rage another must.
Yet you had better fall into God's hands,
Than into those of men. [To the herdsman.

Herdsman, do thou
Console my wife, should aught of ill befall me.
I do but what I may not leave undone.

[He leaps into the boat.

KUONI (*to the fisherman*).

A pretty man to be a boatman, truly!
What Tell could risk, you dared not venture on.

KUONI. Far better men than I would not ape Tell.
There does not live his fellow 'mong the mountains.

WERNI (*who has ascended a rock*).

He pushes off. God help thee now, brave sailor!
Look how his bark is reeling on the waves!

KUONI (*on the shore*).

The surge has swept clean over it. And now
'Tis out of sight. Yet stay, there 'tis again!

Stoutly he stems the breakers, noble fellow!

SESSI. Here come the troopers hard as they can ride!

KUONI. Heavens! so they do! Why, that was help, indeed.
(Enter a troop of horsemen.

1ST H. Give up the murderer ! You have him here !

2ND H. This way he came ! 'Tis useless to conceal him !

RUODI and KUONI.

Whom do you mean ?

FIRST HORSEMAN (*discovering the boat*).

The devil ! What do I see ?

WERNI (*from above*).

Is't him in yonder boat ye seek ? Ride on,

If you lay to, you may o'ertake him yet.

2ND H. Curse on you, he's escaped !

FIRST HORSEMAN (*to the shepherd and fisherman*).

You help'd him off,

And you shall pay for it. Fall on their herds !

Down with the cottage ! burn it ! beat it down !

[*They rush off.*

SESSI (*hurrying after them*). Oh my poor lambs !

KUONI (*following him*). Unhappy me, my herds !

WERNI. The tyrants !

RUODI (*wringing his hands*).

Righteous Heaven ! Oh, when will come
Deliverance to this devoted land ? [*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE II.

A lime tree in front of STAUFFACHER'S house at Steinen, in Schwytz, upon the public road, near a bridge.

WERNER STAUFFACHER and PFEIFFER, of Lucerne, enter
into conversation.

PFEIFF. Ay, ay, friend Stauffacher, as I have said,

Swear not to Austria, if you can help it.

Hold by the Empire stoutly as of yore,

And God preserve you in your ancient freedom !

[*Presses his hand warmly and is going.*

STAUFF. Wait till my mistress comes. Now do ! You are
My guest in Schwytz—I in Lucerne am yours.

PFEIFF. Thanks ! thanks ! But I must reach Gersau to-day.

Whatever grievances your rulers' pride

And grasping avarice may yet inflict,

Bear them in patience—soon a change may come.

Another emperor may mount the throne.
But Austria's once, and you are hers for ever. [Exit.

[STAUFFACHER sits down sorrowfully upon a bench
under the lime tree. Gertrude, his wife, enters,
and finds him in this posture. She places herself
near him, and looks at him for some time in
silence.

GERT. So sad, my love ! I scarcely know thee now.
For many a day in silence I have mark'd
A moody sorrow furrowing thy brow.
Some silent grief is weighing on thy heart.
Trust it to me. I am thy faithful wife,
And I demand my half of all thy cares.

[STAUFFACHER gives her his hand and is silent.
Tell me what can oppress thy spirits thus ?
Thy toil is blest—the world goes well with thee—
Our barns are full—our cattle, many a score ;
Our handsome team of sleek and well-fed steeds
Brought from the mountain pastures safely home,
To winter in their comfortable stalls.
There stands thy house—no nobleman's more fair !
'Tis newly built with timber of the best,
All grooved and fitted with the nicest skill ;
Its many glistening windows tell of comfort !
'Tis quarter'd o'er with scutcheons of all hues,
And proverbs sage, which passing travellers
Linger to read, and ponder o'er their meaning.

STAUFF. The house is strongly built, and handsomely,
But, ah ! the ground on which we built it totters.

GERT. Tell me, dear Werner, what you mean by that ?

STAUFF. No later since than yesterday, I sat
Beneath this linden, thinking with delight,
How fairly all was finished, when from Küssnacht,
The Viceroy and his men came riding by.
Before this house he halted in surprise :
At once I rose, and, as beseemed his rank,
Advanced respectfully to greet the lord,
To whom the Emperor delegates his power,
As judge supreme within our Canton here.
“ Who is the owner of this house ? ” he asked,
With mischief in his thoughts, for well he knew.

With prompt decision, thus I answered him :
 "The Emperor, your grace—my lord and yours,
 And held by me in fief." On this he answered,
 "I am the Emperor's viceregent here,
 And will not that each peasant churl should build
 At his own pleasure, bearing him as freely
 As though he were the master in the land.
 I shall make bold to put a stop to this!"
 So saying, he, with menaces, rode off,
 And left me musing with a heavy heart,
 On the fell purpose that his words betray'd.

GERT. Mine own dear lord and husband ! Wilt thou take
 A word of honest counsel from thy wife ?
 I boast to be the noble Iberg's child,
 A man of wide experience. Many a time,
 As we sat spinning in the winter nights,
 My sisters and myself, the people's chiefs
 Were wont to gather round our father's hearth,
 To read the old imperial charters, and
 To hold sage converse on the country's weal.
 Then heedfully I listened, marking well
 What or the wise man thought, or good man wished ;
 And garner'd up their wisdom in my heart.
 Hear then, and mark me well ; for thou wilt see,
 I long have known the grief that weighs thee down.
 The Viceroy hates thee, fain would injure thee,
 For thou hast cross'd his wish to bend the Swiss
 In homage to this upstart house of princes,
 And kept them staunch, like their good sires of old,
 In true allegiance to the Empire. Say,
 Is't not so, Werner ? Tell me, am I wrong ?

STAUFF. 'Tis even so. For this doth Gessler hate me.

GERT. He burns with envy, too, to see thee living
 Happy and free on thine inheritance,
 For he has none. From the Emperor himself
 Thou hold'st in fief the lands thy fathers left thee.
 There's not a prince i'the Empire that can show
 A better title to his heritage ;
 For thou hast over thee no lord but one,
 And he the mightiest of all Christian kings.
 Gessler, we knew, is but a younger son,

His only wealth the knightly cloak he wears ;
He therefore views an honest man's good fortune
With a malignant and a jealous eye.
Long has he sworn to compass thy destruction.
As yet thou art uninjured. Wilt thou wait,
Till he may safely give his malice scope ?
A wise man would anticipate the blow.

STAUFF. What's to be done ?

GERT. Now hear what I advise.
Thou knowest well, how here with us in Schwytz
All worthy men are groaning underneath
This Gessler's grasping, grinding tyranny.
Doubt not the men of Unterwald as well,
And Uri, too, are chafing like ourselves,
At this oppressive and heart-wearying yoke.
For there, across the lake, the Landenberg
Wields the same iron rule as Gessler here—
No fishing-boat comes over to our side,
But brings the tidings of some new encroachment,
Some outrage fresh, more grievous than the last.
Then it were well, that some of you—true men—
Men sound at heart, should secretly devise,
How best to shake this hateful thralldom off.
Well do I know, that God would not desert you,
But lend his favour to the righteous cause.
Hast thou no friend in Uri, say, to whom
Thou frankly may'st unbosom all thy thoughts ?

STAUFF. I know full many a gallant fellow there,
And nobles, too,—great men, of high repute,
In whom I can repose unbounded trust. [Rising.
Wife ! What a storm of wild and perilous thoughts
Hast thou stirr'd up within my tranquil breast ?
The darkest musings of my bosom thou
Hast dragg'd to light, and placed them full before me ;
And what I scarce dared harbour e'en in thought,
Thou speakest plainly out, with fearless tongue.
But hast thou weigh'd well what thou urgest thus ?
Discord will come, and the fierce clang of arms,
To scare this valley's long unbroken peace,
If we, a feeble shepherd race, shall dare
Him to the fight, that lords it o'er the world.

Ev'n now they only wait some fair pretext
 For setting loose their savage warrior hordes,
 To scourge and ravage this devoted land,
 To lord it o'er us with the victor's rights,
 And, 'neath the show of lawful chastisement,
 Despoil us of our chartered liberties.

GERT. You, too, are men; can wield a battle axe
 As well as they. God ne'er deserts the brave.

STAUFF. Oh wife! a horrid, ruthless fiend is war,
 That strikes at once the shepherd and his flock.

GERT. Whate'er great Heaven inflicts, we must endure;
 No heart of noble temper brooks injustice.

STAUFF. This house—thy pride—war, unrelenting war,
 Will burn it down.

GERT. And did I think this heart
 Enslaved and fettered to the things of earth,
 With *my* own hand I'd hurl the kindling torch.

STAUFF. Thou hast faith in human kindness, wife; but war
 Spares not the tender infant in its cradle.

GERT. There is a friend to innocence in heaven!
 Look forward, Werner—not behind you, now!

STAUFF. We men may perish bravely, sword in hand;
 But oh, what fate, my Gertrude, may be thine?

GERT. None are so weak, but one last choice is left.
 A spring from yonder bridge, and I am free!

STAUFF. (*embracing her*).
 Well may he fight for hearth and home, that clasps
 A heart so rare as thine against his own!
 What are the hosts of Emperors to him?
 Gertrude, farewell! I will to Uri straight.
 There lives my worthy comrade, Walter Fürst;
 His thoughts and mine upon these times are one.
 There, too, resides the noble Banneret
 Of Attinghaus. High though of blood he be,
 He loves the people, honours their old customs.
 With both of these I will take counsel, how
 To rid us bravely of our country's foe.
 Farewell! and while I am away, bear thou
 A watchful eye in management at home.
 The pilgrim, journeying to the house of God,
 And pious monk, collecting for his cloister,

To these give liberally from purse and garner.
 Stauffacher's house would not be hid. Right out
 Upon the public way it stands, and offers
 To all that pass an hospitable roof.

[*While they are retiring, TELL enters with BAUMGARTEN*
TELL. Now, then, you have no further need of me.
 Enter yon house. 'Tis Werner Stauffacher's,
 A man that is a father to distress.
 See, there he is, himself! Come, follow me.
 [*They retire up. Scene changes.*

SCENE III.

A common near Altdorf. On an eminence in the back-ground a Castle in progress of erection, and so far advanced that the outline of the whole may be distinguished. The back part is finished; men are working at the front. Scaffolding, on which the workmen are going up and down. A slater is seen upon the highest part of the roof. All is bustle and activity.

TASKMASTER, MASON, WORKMEN and LABOURERS.

TASK. (*with a stick, urging on the workmen).*

Up, up! You've rested long enough. To work!
 The stones here! Now the mortar, and the lime!
 And let his lordship see the work advanced,
 When next he comes. These fellows crawl like
 snails!

[*To two labourers, with loads.*

What! call ye that a load? Go, double it.
 Is this the way ye earn your wages, laggards?

1ST W. 'Tis very hard that we must bear the stones,
 To make a keep and dungeon for ourselves!

TASK. What's that you mutter? 'Tis a worthless race,
 And fit for nothing but to milk their cows,
 And saunter idly up and down the mountains.

OLD MAN (*sinks down exhausted).*

I can no more.

TASK. (*shaking him).*

Up, up, old man, to work!

1ST W. Have you no bowels of compassion, thus
 To press so hard upon a poor old man,
 That scarce can drag his feeble limbs along?

MASTER MASON and WORKMEN.

Shame, shame upon you—shame! It cries to heaven!

TASK. Mind your own business. I but do my duty.

1ST W. Pray, master, what's to be the name of this
Same castle, when 'tis built?

TASK. The Keep of Uri;
For by it we shall keep you in subjection.

WORK. The Keep of Uri?

TASK. Well, why laugh at that?

2ND W. So you'll keep Uri with this paltry place!

1ST W. How many molehills such as that must first
Be piled above each other, ere you make
A mountain equal to the least in Uri?

[*TASKMASTER retires up the stage.*

MAS. M. I'll drown the mallet in the deepest lake,
That served my hand on this accursed pile.

[*Enter TELL and STAUFFACHER.*

STAUFF. O, that I had not lived to see this sight!

TELL. Here 'tis not good to be. Let us proceed.

STAUFF. Am I in Uri, in the land of freedom?

MAS. M. O, sir, if you could only see the vaults
Beneath these towers. The man that tenants them
Will never hear the cock crow more.

STAUFF. O God!

MASON. Look at these ramparts and these buttresses,
That seem as they were built to last for ever.

TELL. Hands can destroy whatever hands have rear'd.

[*Pointing to the mountains.*

That house of freedom God hath built for us.

[*A drum is heard. People enter bearing a cap
upon a pole, followed by a crier. Women and
children thronging tumultuously after them.*

1ST W. What means the drum? Give heed!

MASON. Why, here's a mumming!

And look, the cap—what can they mean by that?

RIER. In the Emperor's name, give ear!

WORK. Hush! silence! hush!

RIER. Ye men of Uri, ye do see this cap!

It will be set upon a lofty pole

In Altdorf, in the market place,* and this

Is the Lord Governor's good will and pleasure,

The cap shall have like honour as himself,
 And all shall reverence it with bended knee,
 And head uncovered ; thus the king will know
 Who are his true and loyal subjects here ;
 His life and goods are forfeit to the crown,
 That shall refuse obedience to the order.

[*The people burst out into laughter. The drum beats, and the procession passes on.*

- 1ST W. A strange device to fall upon, indeed !
 Do reverence to a cap ! A pretty farce !
 Heard ever mortal anything like this ?
- MAS. M. Down to a cap on bended knee, forsooth !
 Rare jesting this with men of sober sense !
- 1ST W. Nay, were it but the imperial crown, indeed !
 But 'tis the cap of Austria ! I've seen it
 Hanging above the throne in Gessler's hall.
- MASON. The cap of Austria ? Mark that ! A snare
 To get us into Austria's power, by Heaven !
- WORK. No freeborn man will stoop to such disgrace.
- MAS. M. Come—to our comrades, and advise with them !

[*They retire up.*

TELL (*to STAUFFACHER*).

You see how matters stand. Farewell, my friend !

STAUFF. Whither away ? Oh, leave us not so soon.

TELL. They look for me at home. So fare ye well.

STAUFF. My heart's so full, and has so much to tell you.

TELL. Words will not make a heart that's heavy light.

STAUFF. Yet words may possibly conduct to deeds.

TELL. All we can do is to endure in silence.

STAUFF. But shall we bear what is not to be borne ?

TELL. Impetuous rulers have the shortest reigns.

When the fierce Southwind rises from his chasms,

Men cover up their fires, the ships in haste

Make for the harbour, and the mighty spirit

Sweeps o'er the earth, and leaves no trace behind.

Let every man live quietly at home ;

Peace to the peaceful rarely is denied.

STAUFF. And is it thus you view our grievances ?

TELL. The serpent stings not, till it is provoked.

Let them alone ; they'll weary of themselves,

Whene'er they see we are not to be roused.

STAUFF. Much might be done—did we stand fast together.

TELL. When the ship founders, he will best escape,
Who seeks no other's safety but his own.

STAUFF. And you desert the common cause so coldly?

TELL. A man can safely count but on himself!

STAUFF. Nay, even the weak grow strong by union.

TELL. But the strong man is strongest when alone.

STAUFF. Your country, then, cannot rely on you,
If in despair she rise against her foes.

TELL. Tell rescues the lost sheep from yawning gulphs.

Is he a man, then, to desert his friends?

Yet, whatsoe'er you do, spare me from council!

I was not born to ponder and select;

But when your course of action is resolved,

Then call on Tell; you shall not find him fail.

[*Exeunt severally. A sudden tumult is heard around the scaffolding.*

MASON (*running in*). What's wrong?

FIRST WORKMAN (*running forward*).

The slater's fallen from the roof.

BERTHA (*rushing in*).

Is he dashed to pieces? Run—save him, help!

If help be possible, save him! Here is gold.

[*Throws her trinkets among the people.*

MASON. Hence with your gold,—your universal charm,
And remedy for ill! When you have torn
Fathers from children, husbands from their wives,
And scattered woe and wail throughout the land,
You think with gold to compensate for all.
Hence! Till we saw you, we were happy men;
With you came misery and dark despair.

BERTHA (*to the TASKMASTER, who has returned*).

Lives he?

[*TASKMASTER shakes his head.*

Ill-fated towers, with curses built,
And doomed with curses to be tenanted! [Exit.

SCENE IV.

The House of WALTER FURST. WALTER FURST and ARNOLD VON MELCHTHAL enter simultaneously at different sides:

MELCH. Good Walter Fürst.

FURST. If we should be surprised!

Stay where you are. We are beset with spies.

MELCH. Have you no news for me from Unterwald?

What of my father? 'Tis not to be borne,

Thus to be pent up like a felon here!

What have I done of such a heinous stamp,

To skulk and hide me like a murderer?

I only laid my staff across the fingers

Of the pert varlet, when before my eyes,

By order of the governor, he tried

To drive away my handsome team of oxen.

FURST. You are too rash by far. He did no more

Than what the governor had ordered him.

You had transgress'd, and therefore should have paid

The penalty, however hard, in silence.

MELCH. Was I to brook the fellow's saucy words?

"That if the peasant must have bread to eat,

"Why, let him go and draw the plough himself!"

It cut me to the very soul to see

My oxen, noble creatures, when the knave

Unyoked them from the plough. As though they felt

The wrong, they lowed and butted with their horns.

On this I could contain myself no longer,

And, overcome by passion, struck him down.

FURST. O, we old men can scarce command ourselves!

And can we wonder youth should break its bounds?

MELCH. I'm only sorry for my father's sake!

To be away from him, that needs so much

My fostering care! The governor detests him,

Because he hath, whene'er occasion served,

Stood stoutly up for right and liberty.

Therefore they'll bear him hard—the poor old man!

And there is none to shield him from their gripe.

Come what come may, I must go home again.

FURST. Compose yourself, and wait in patience till

We get some tidings o'er from Unterwald.

Away! away! I hear a knock! Perhaps
 A message from the Viceroy! Get thee in!
 You are not safe from Landenberger's* arm
 In Uri, for these tyrants pull together.

MELCH. They teach us Switzers what we ought to do.
 FURST. Away! I'll call you when the coast is clear.

[MELCHTHON retires.

Unhappy youth! I dare not tell him all
 The evil that my boding heart predicts!
 Who's there? The door ne'er opens, but I look
 For tidings of mishap. Suspicion lurks
 With darkling treachery in every nook.
 Even to our inmost rooms they force their way,
 These myrmidons of power; and soon we'll need
 To fasten bolts and bars upon our doors.

[He opens the door, and steps back in surprise as
 WEBNER STAUFFACHER enters.

What do I see? You, Werner? Now, by Heaven!
 A valued guest, indeed. No man e'er set
 His foot across this threshold, more esteem'd.
 Welcome! thrice welcome, Werner, to my roof!
 What brings you here? What seek you here in Uri?

STAUFF. (shakes FURST by the hand).

The olden times and olden Switzerland.

FURST. You bring them with you. See how I'm rejoiced,
 My heart leaps at the very sight of you.
 Sit down—sit down, and tell me how you left
 Your charming wife, fair Gertrude? Iberg's child,
 And clever as her father. Not a man,
 That wends from Germany, by Meinrad's Cell,†
 To Italy, but praises far and wide
 Your house's hospitality. But say,
 Have you come here direct from Flüelen,
 And have you noticed nothing on your way,
 Before you halted at my door?

* Berenger von Landenberg, a man of noble family in Thurgau, and Governor of Unterwald, infamous for his cruelties to the Swiss, and particularly to the venerable Henry of the Halden. He was slain at the battle of Morgarten, in 1315.

† A cell built in the 9th century, by Meinrad, Count of Hohensoltern, the founder of the Convent of Einsiedeln, subsequently alluded to in the text.

- STAUFF. (*sits down*). I saw
 A work in progress, as I came along,
 I little thought to see—that likes me ill.
- FURST. O friend ! you've lighted on my thought at once.
- STAUFF. Such things in Uri ne'er were known before.
 Never was prison here in man's remembrance,
 Nor ever any stronghold but the grave.
- FURST. You name it well. It is the grave of freedom.
- STAUFF. Friend, Walter Fürst, I will be plain with you.
 No idle curiosity it is,
 That brings me here, but heavy cares. I left
 Thraldom at home, and thraldom meets me here.
 Our wrongs, e'en now, are more than we can bear,
 And who shall tell us where they are to end ?
 From eldest time the Switzer has been free,
 Accustom'd only to the mildest rule.
 Such things as now we suffer, ne'er were known,
 Since herdsman first drove cattle to the hills.
- FURST. Yes, our oppressions are unparalleled !
 Why, even our own good lord of Attinghaus,
 Who lived in olden times, himself declares,
 They are no longer to be tamely borne.
- STAUFF. In Unterwalden yonder 'tis the same ;
 And bloody has the retribution been.
 The imperial Seneschal, the Wolfshot, who
 At Rossberg dwelt, long'd for forbidden fruit—
 Baumgarten's wife, that lives at Alzellen,
 He wished to overcome in shameful sort,
 On which the husband slew him with his axe.
- FURST. O, Heaven is just in all its judgments still !
 Baumgarten, say you ? A most worthy man.
 Has he escaped, and is he safely hid ?
- STAUFF. Your son-in-law conveyed him o'er the lake,
 And he lies hidden in my house at Steinen.
 He brought the tidings with him of a thing
 That has been done at Sarnen, worse than all,
 A thing to make the very heart run blood !
- FURST (*attentively*). Say on. What is it ?
- STAUFF. There dwells in Melchthal, then,
 Just as you enter by the road from Kerns,

An upright man, named Henry of the Halden,
A man of weight and influence in the Diet.

FURST. Who knows him not? But what of him? Proceed.

STAUFF. The Landenberg, to punish some offence,
Committed by the old man's son, it seems,
Had given command to take the youth's best pair
Of oxen from his plough ; on which the lad
Struck down the messenger and took to flight.

FURST. But the old father—tell me, what of him?

STAUFF. The Landenberg sent for him, and required
He should produce his son upon the spot;
And when the old man protested, and with truth,
That he knew nothing of the fugitive,
The tyrant call'd his torturers.

FURST (*springs up and tries to lead him to the other side*).

Hush, no more!

STAUFFACHER (*with increasing warmth*).

"And though thy son," he cried, "has 'scaped me now,
I have thee fast, and thou shalt feel my vengeance."
With that they flung the old man to the earth,
And plunged the pointed steel into his eyes.

FURST. Merciful Heaven!

MELCH. (*rushing out*).

Into his eyes, his eyes?

STAUFF. (*addresses himself in astonishment to WALTER FURST*).

Who is this youth?

MELCH. (*grasping him convulsively*).

Into his eyes? Speak, speak!

FURST. Oh, miserable hour!

STAUFF. Who is it, tell me?

[STAUFFACHER makes a sign to him.

It is his son ! All righteous heaven !

MELCH. And I

Must be from thence! What! into both h

FURST. Be calm, be calm; and bear it like a man!

And all for me—for my mad wilful folly!

Blind, did you say? Quite blind—and both his

STAUFF. Ev'n so. The fountain of his sight's dried up.

He ne'er will see the blessed sunshine more.

FURST. Oh, spare his anguish!

MELCH.

Never, never more!

[Presses his hands upon his eyes and is silent for some moments; then turning from one to the other, speaks in a subdued tone, broken by sobs.]

O the eye's light, of all the gifts of Heaven,
 The dearest, best! From light all beings live—
 Each fair created thing—the very plants
 Turn with a joyful transport to the light,
 And he—he must drag on through all his days
 In endless darkness! Never more for him
 The sunny meads shall glow, the flow'rets bloom;
 Nor shall he more behold the roseate tints
 Of the iced mountain top! To die is nothing,
 But to have life, and not have sight,—oh, that
 Is misery indeed! Why do you look
 So piteously at me? I have two eyes,
 Yet to my poor blind father can give neither!
 No, not one gleam of that great sea of light,
 That with its dazzling splendour floods my gaze.

STAUFF. Ah, I must swell the measure of your grief,
 Instead of soothing it. The worst, alas!
 Remains to tell. They've stripp'd him of his all;
 Nought have they left him, save his staff, on which,
 Blind, and in rags, he moves from door to door.

MELCH. Nought but his staff to the old eyeless man!
 Stripp'd of his all—even of the light of day,
 The common blessing of the meanest wretch.
 Tell me no more of patience, of concealment!
 Oh, what a base and coward thing am I,
 That on mine own security I thought,
 And took no care of thine! Thy precious head
 Left as a pledge within the tyrant's grasp!
 Hence, craven-hearted prudence, hence! And all
 My thoughts be vengeance, and the despot's blood!
 I'll seek him straight—no power shall stay me now—
 And at his hands demand my father's eyes.
 I'll beard him 'mid a thousand myrmidons!
 What's life to me, if in his heart's best blood
 I cool the fever of this mighty anguish. [*He is going.*]

FURST. Stay, this is madness, Melchthal! What avails
 Your single arm against his power? He sits

At Sarnen high within his lordly keep,
And, safe within its battlemented walls,
May laugh to scorn your unavailing rage.

MELCH. And though he sat within the icy domes
Of yon far Schreckhorn—ay, or higher, where
Veil'd since eternity, the Jungfrau soars,
Still to the tyrant would I make my way;
With twenty comrades minded like myself,
I'd lay his fastness level with the earth!
And if none follow me, and if you all,
In terror for your homesteads and your herds,
Bow in submission to the tyrant's yoke,
I'll call the herdsmen on the hills around me,
And there beneath heaven's free and boundless roof,
Where men still feel as men, and hearts are true,
Proclaim aloud this foul enormity!

STAUFF. (*to FURST*).

'Tis at its height—and are we then to wait
Till some extremity—

MELCHTHAL. What extremity
Remains for apprehension, when men's eyes
Have ceased to be secure within their sockets?
Are we defenceless? Wherefore did we learn
To bend the cross-bow,—wield the battle-axe?
What living creature, but in its despair,
Finds for itself a weapon of defence?
The baited stag will turn, and with the show
Of his dread antlers hold the hounds at bay;
The chamois drags the huntsman down th' abyss;
The very ox, the partner of man's toil,
The sharer of his roof, that meekly bends
The strength of his huge neck beneath the yoke,
Springs up, if he's provoked, whets his strong horn,
And tosses his tormentor to the clouds.

FURST. If the three Cantons thought as we three do,
Something might, then, be done, with good effect.

STAUFF. When Uri calls, when Unterwald replies,
Schwytz will be mindful of her ancient league *.

* The League, or Bond, of the Three Cantons was of very ancient origin. They met and renewed it from time to time, especially when their liberties

MELCH. I've many friends in Unterwald, and none
 That would not gladly venture life and limb,
 If fairly back'd and aided by the rest.
 Oh, sage and reverend fathers of this land,
 Here do I stand before your riper years,
 An unskill'd youth, whose voice must in the Diet
 Still be subdued into respectful silence.
 Do not, because that I am young, and want
 Experience, slight my counsel and my words.
 'Tis not the wantonness of youthful blood

were threatened with danger. A remarkable instance of this occurred in the end of the 13th century, when Albert, of Austria, became Emperor, and when, possibly, for the first time, the Bond was reduced to writing. As it is important to the understanding of many passages of the play, a translation is subjoined of the oldest known document relating to it. The original, which is in Latin and German, is dated in August, 1291, and is under the seals of the whole of the men of Schwytz, the commonalty of the vale of Uri and the whole of the men of the upper and lower vales of Stanz.

THE BOND.

Be it known to every one, that the men of the Dale of Uri, the Community of Schwytz, as also the men of the mountains of Unterwald, in consideration of the evil times, have full confidently bound themselves, and sworn to help each other with all their power and might, property and people, against all who shall do violence to them, or any of them. That is our Ancient Bond.

Whoever hath a Seignior, let him obey according to the conditions of his service.

We are agreed to receive into these dales no Judge, who is not a countryman and indweller, or who hath bought his place.

Every controversy amongst the sworn confederates shall be determined by some of the sagest of their number, and if any one shall challenge their judgment, then shall he be constrained to obey it by the rest.

Whoever intentionally or deceitfully kills another, shall be executed, and whoever shelters him shall be banished.

Whoever burns the property of another shall no longer be regarded as a countryman, and whoever shelters him shall make good the damage done.

Whoever injures another, or robs him, and hath property in our country, shall make satisfaction out of the same.

No one shall distrain a debtor without a judge, nor any one who is not his debtor, or the surety for such debtor.

Every one in these dales shall submit to the judge, or we, the sworn confederates, all will take satisfaction for all the injury occasioned by his contumacy. And if in any internal division the one party will not accept justice, all the rest shall help the other party. These decrees shall, God willing, endure eternally for our general advantage.

That fires my spirit ; but a pang so deep
 That e'en the flinty rocks must pity me.
 You, too, are fathers, heads of families,
 And you must wish to have a virtuous son,
 To reverence your grey hairs, and shield your eyes
 With pious and affectionate regard.
 Do not, I pray, because in limb and fortune
 You still are unassail'd, and still your eyes
 Revolve undimm'd and sparkling in their spheres ;
 Oh, do not, therefore, disregard our wrongs !
 Above you, too, doth hang the tyrant's sword.
 You, too, have striven to alienate the land
 From Austria. This was all my father's crime :
 You share his guilt, and may his punishment.

STAUFFACHER (to FURST).

Do thou resolve ! I am prepared to follow.

FURST. First let us learn, what steps the noble lords
 Von Sillinen and Attinghaus propose.

Their names would rally thousands in the cause.

MELCH. Is there a name within the Forest Mountains
 That carries more respect than thine—and thine ?
 To names like these the people cling for help
 With confidence—such names are household words.
 Rich was your heritage of manly virtue,
 And richly have you added to its stores.
 What need of nobles ? Let us do the work
 Ourselves. Although we stood alone, methinks,
 We should be able to maintain our rights.

STAUFFE. The nobles' wrongs are not so great as ours.
 The torrent, that lays waste the lower grounds,
 Hath not ascended to the uplands yet.
 But let them see the country once in arms,
 They'll not refuse to lend a helping hand.

FURST. Were there an umpire 'twixt ourselves and Austria,
 Justice and law might then decide our quarrel.
 But our oppressor is our emperor too,
 And judge supreme. 'Tis God must help us, then,
 And our own arm ! Be yours the task to rouse
 The men of Schwytz ; I'll rally friends in Uri.
 But whom are we to send to Unterwald ?

MELCH. Thither send me. Whom should it more concern ?

FURST. No, Melchthal, no ; thou art my guest, and I
Must answer for thy safety.

MELCHTHAL. Let me go.

I know each forest track and mountain pass ;
Friends too I'll find, be sure, on every hand,
To give me willing shelter from the foe.

STAUFF. Nay, let him go ; no traitors harbour there :
For tyranny is so abhorred in Unterwald,
No minions can be found to work her will.
In the low valleys, too, the Alzeller
Will gain confederates, and rouse the country.

MELCH. But how shall we communicate, and not
Awaken the suspicion of the tyrants ?

STAUFF. Might we not meet at Brunnen or at Treib,
Hard by the spot where merchant vessels land ?

FURST. We must not go so openly to work.
Hear my opinion. On the lake's left bank,
As we sail hence to Brunnen, right against
The Mytenstein, deep-hidden in the wood
A meadow lies, by shepherds called the Rootli,
Because the wood has been uprooted there.
'Tis where our Canton bound'ries verge on yours ;—

[To MELCHTHAL.

Your boat will carry you across from Schwytz.

[To STAUFFACHER.

Thither by lonely bypaths let us wend
At midnight, and deliberate o'er our plans.
Let each bring with him there ten trusty men,
All one at heart with us ; and then we may
Consult together for the general weal,
And, with God's guidance, fix our onward course.

STAUFF. So let it be. And now your true right hand !
Yours, too, young man ! and as we now three men
Among ourselves thus knit our hands together
In all sincerity and truth, e'en so
Shall we three Cantons, too, together stand
In victory and defeat, in life and death.

FURST and MELCHTHAL.

In life and death.

[They hold their hands clasped together for some
moments in silence.

MELCHTHAL.

Alas, my old blind father!

Thou canst no more behold the day of freedom;
 But thou shalt hear it. When from Alp to Alp
 The beacon fires throw up their flaming signs,
 And the proud castles of the tyrants fall,
 Into thy cottage shall the Switzer burst,
 Bear the glad tidings to thine ear, and o'er
 Thy darken'd way shall Freedom's radiance pour.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

The Mansion of the BARON OF ATTINGHAUSEN. A Gothic Hall, decorated with escutcheons and helmets. The BARON, a grey-headed man, eighty-five years old, tall and of a commanding mien, clad in a furred pelisse, and leaning on a staff tipped with chamois horn. KUONI and six hinds standing round him with rakes and scythes. ULRICH OF RUDENZ enters in the costume of a Knight.

RUD. . . Uncle, I'm here! Your will?

ATTINGHAUSEN. First let me share,

After the ancient custom of our house,
 The morning cup, with these my faithful servants!

[He drinks from a cup, which is then passed round.
 Time was, I stood myself in field and wood,
 With mine own eyes directing all their toil,
 Even as my banner led them in the fight,
 Now I am only fit to play the steward;
 And, if the genial sun come not to me,
 I can no longer seek it on the mountains.
 Thus slowly, in an ever narrowing sphere,
 I move on to the narrowest and the last,
 Where all life's pulses cease. I now am but
 The shadow of my former self, and that
 Is fading fast—'twill soon be but a name.

KUONI (offering RUDENZ the cup).

A pledge, young master!

[RUDENZ hesitates to take the cup.]

Nay, Sir, drink it off!

One cup, one heart! You know our proverb, Sir?

ATTING. Go, children, and at eve, when work is done,
We'll meet and talk the country's business over.

[*Exit Servants.*

Belted and plumed, and all thy bravery on !

Thou art for Altdorf—for the castle, boy ?

RUD. . . Yes, uncle. Longer may I not delay—

ATTINGHAUSEN (*sitting down*).

Why in such haste ? Say, are thy youthful hours
Dol'd in such niggard measure, that thou must
Be chary of them to thy aged uncle ?

RUD. . . I see, my presence is not needed here,
I am but as a stranger in this house.

ATTINGHAUSEN (*gazes fixedly at him for a considerable time*).

Alas, thou art indeed ! Alas, that home
To thee has grown so strange ! Oh, Uly ! Uly !
I scarce do know thee now, thus deck'd in silks,
The peacock's feather * flaunting in thy cap,
And purple mantle round thy shoulders flung ;
Thou look'st upon the peasant with disdain,
And takest with a blush his honest greeting.

RUD. . . All honour due to him I gladly pay,
But must deny the right he would usurp.

ATTING. The sore displeasure of the king is resting
Upon the land, and every true man's heart
Is full of sadness for the grievous wrongs
We suffer from our tyrants. Thou alone
Art all unmoved amid the general grief.
Abandoning thy friends, thou tak'st thy stand
Beside thy country's foes, and, as in scorn
Of our distress, pursuest giddy joys,
Courting the smiles of princes, all the while
Thy country bleeds beneath their cruel scourge.

RUD. . . The land is sore oppress'd, I know it, uncle.
But why ? Who plunged it into this distress ?
A word, one little easy word, might buy
Instant deliverance from such dire oppression,
And win the good will of the Emperor.

* The Austrian knights were in the habit of wearing a plume of peacocks' feathers in their helmets. After the overthrow of the Austrian dominion in Switzerland, it was made highly penal to wear the peacock's feather at any public assembly there.

Woe unto those, who seal the people's eyes,
 And make them adverse to their country's good—
 The men, who, for their own vile selfish ends,
 Are seeking to prevent the Forest States
 From swearing fealty to Austria's House,
 As all the countries round about have done.
 It fits their humour well, to take their seats
 Amid the nobles on the Herrenbank*;
 They'll have the Cæsar for their lord, forsooth,—
 That is to say, they'll have no lord at all.

ATTING. Must I hear this, and from thy lips, rash boy !

RUD. . . You urged me to this answer. Hear me out.
 What, uncle, is the character you've stoop'd
 To fill contentedly through life ? Have you
 No higher pride, than in these lonely wilds
 To be the Landamman or Banneret†,
 The petty chieftain of a shepherd race ?
 How ! Were it not a far more glorious choice,
 To bend in homage to our royal lord,
 And swell the princely splendours of his court,
 Than sit at home, the peer of your own vassals,
 And share the judgment-seat with vulgar clowns ?

ATTING. Ah, Uly, Uly; all too well I see,
 The tempter's voice has caught thy willing ear,
 And pour'd its subtle poison in thy heart.

RUD. . . Yes, I conceal it not. It doth offend
 My inmost soul, to hear the stranger's gibes,
 That taunt us with the name of " Peasant Nobles !" "
 Think you the heart that's stirring here can brook,
 While all the young nobility around
 Are reaping honour under Habsburg's banner,
 That I should loiter, in inglorious ease,
 Here on the heritage my fathers left,
 And, in the dull routine of vulgar toil,
 Lose all life's glorious spring ? In other lands
 Deeds are achieved. A world of fair renown
 Beyond these mountains stirs in martial pomp.

* The bench reserved for the nobility.

† The Landamman was an officer chosen by the Swiss Gemeinde, or Diet, *
 to preside over them. The Banneret was an officer entrusted with the
 keeping of the State Banner, and such others as were taken in battle.

My helm and shield are rusting in the hall;
The martial trumpet's spirit-stirring blast,
The herald's call, inviting to the lists,
Rouse not the echoes of these vales, where nought,
Save cowherd's horn and cattle bell, is heard,
In one unvarying dull monotony.

ATTING. Deluded boy, seduced by empty show!
Despise the land that gave thee birth! Ashamed
Of the good ancient customs of thy sires!
The day will come, when thou, with burning tears,
Wilt long for home, and for thy native hills,
And that dear melody of tuneful herds,
Which now, in proud disgust, thou dost despise!
A day when thou wilt drink its tones in sadness,
Hearing their music in a foreign land.
Oh! potent is the spell that binds to home!
No, no, the cold, false world is not for thee.
At the proud court, with thy true heart, thou wilt
For ever feel a stranger among strangers.
The world asks virtues of far other stamp
Than thou hast learned within these simple vales.
But go—go thither,—barter thy free soul,
Take land in fief, become a prince's vassal,
Where thou might'st be lord paramount, and prince
Of all thine own unburden'd heritage!
O, Uly, Uly, stay among thy people!
Go not to Altdorf. Oh, abandon not
The sacred cause of thy wrong'd native land!
I am the last of all my race. My name
Ends with me. Yonder hang my helm and shield;
They will be buried with me in the grave*.
And must I think, when yielding up my breath,
That thou but wait'st the closing of mine eyes,
To stoop thy knee to this new feudal court,
And take in vassalage from Austria's hands
The noble lands, which I from God received,
Free and unfetter'd as the mountain air!

RUD. . . 'Tis vain for us to strive against the king.
The world pertains to him:—shall we alone,

* According to the custom, by which, when the last male descendant of a noble family died, his sword, helmet, and shield, were buried with him.

In mad presumptuous obstinacy, strive
 To break that mighty chain of lands, which he
 Hath drawn around us with his giant grasp.
 His are the markets, his the courts,—his too
 The highways ; nay, the very carrier's horse,
 That traffics on the Gotthardt, pays him tell.
 By his dominions, as within a net,
 We are enclosed, and girded round about.
 —And will the Empire shield us ? Say, can it
 Protect itself 'gainst Austria's growing power ?
 To God, and not to emperors must we look !
 What store can on their promises be placed,
 When they, to meet their own necessities,
 Can pawn, and even alienate the towns
 That flee for shelter 'neath the Eagle's wings * ?
 No, uncle ! It is wise and wholesome prudence,
 In times like these, when faction's all abroad,
 To own attachment to some mighty chief.
 The imperial crown's transferred from line to line †,
 It has no memory for faithful service :
 But to secure the favour of these great
 Hereditary masters, were to sow
 Seed for a future harvest.

ATTINGHAUSEN.

Art so wise ?

Wilt thou see clearer than thy noble sires,
 Who battled for fair freedom's costly gem,
 With life, and fortune, and heroic arm ?
 Sail down the lake to Lucern, there inquire,
 How Austria's rule doth weigh the Cantons down.
 Soon she will come to count our sheep, our cattle,
 Te portion out the Alps, e'en to their summits,
 And in our own free woods to hinder us
 From striking down the eagle or the stag ;
 To set her tolls on every bridge and gate,
 Impoverish us, to swell her lust of sway,
 And drain our dearest blood to feed her wars.

* This frequently occurred. But in the event of an imperial city being mortgaged for the purpose of raising money, it lost its freedom, and was considered as put out of the realm.

† An allusion to the circumstance of the Imperial Crown not being hereditary, but conferred by election on one of the Counts of the Empire.

No, if our blood must flow, let it be shed
 In our own cause ! We purchase liberty
 More cheaply far than bondage.

RUDENZ. What can we,
 A shepherd race, against great Albert's hosts ?
 ATTING. Learn, foolish boy, to know this shepherd race !
 I know them, I have led them on in fight,—
 I saw them in the battle at Favenz.
 Austria will try, forsooth, to force on us
 A yoke we are determined not to bear !
 Oh, learn to feel from what a race thou'rt sprung !
 Cast not, for tinsel trash and idle show,
 The precious jewel of thy worth away.
 To be the chieftain of a free born race,
 Bound to thee only by their unbought love,
 Ready to stand—to fight—to die with thee.
 Be that thy pride, be that thy noblest beast !
 Knit to thy heart the ties of kindred—home—
 Cling to the land, the dear land of thy sires,
 Grapple to that with thy whole heart and soul !
 Thy power is rooted deep and strongly here,
 But in yon straunger world thou'l stand alone,
 A trembling reed beat down by every blast.
 Oh come ! 'tis long since we have seen thee, Uly !
 Tarry but this one day. Only to-day
 Go not to Altdorf. Wilt thou ? Not to-day !
 For this one day, bestow thee on thy friends.

[Takes his hand.

RUD. . . I gave my word. Unhand me ! I am bound.

ATTING. (*drops his hand and says sternly*)
 Bound, didst thou say ? Oh yes, unhappy boy,
 Thou art indeed. But not by word or oath.
 'Tis by the silken mesh of love thou'rt bound.

[RUDENZ turns away.

Ay, hide thee, as thou wilt. 'Tis she, I know,
 Bertha of Bruneck, draws thee to the court ;
 'Tis she that chains thee to the Emperor's service,
 Thou think'st to win the noble knightly maid
 By thy apostacy. Be not deceived.
 She is held out before thee as a lure ;
 But never meant for innocence like thine.

RUD. . . No more, I've heard enough. So fare you well.

[*Exit.*]

ATTING. Stay, Uly ! Stay ! Rash boy, he's gone ! I can
Nor hold him back, nor save him from destruction.
And so the Wolfshot has deserted us ;—
Others will follow his example soon.
This foreign witchery, sweeping o'er our hills,
Tears with its potent spell our youth away !
O luckless hour, when men and manners strange
Into these calm and happy valleys came,
To warp our primitive and guileless ways.
The new is pressing on with might. The old,
The good, the simple, fleeteth fast away.
New times come on. A race is springing up,
That think not as their fathers thought before !
What do I here ? All, all are in the grave
With whom erewhile I moved, and held converse ;
My age has long been laid beneath the sod :
Happy the man, who may not live to see
What shall be done by those that follow me !

SCENE II.

A meadow surrounded by high rocks and wooded ground. On the rocks are tracks, with rails and ladders, by which the peasants are afterwards seen descending. In the back-ground the lake is observed, and over it a moon rainbow in the early part of the scene. The prospect is closed by lofty mountains, with glaciers rising behind them. The stage is dark; but the lake and glaciers glisten in the moonlight.

MELCHTHAL, BAUMGARTEN, WINKELRIED, MEYER VON SAR-
NEN, BURKHART AM BUHEL, ARNOLD VON SEWA,
KLAUS VON DER FLUE, and four other peasants, all armed.

MELCHTHAL (*behind the scenes*).

The mountain pass is open. Follow me !
I see the rock, and little cross upon it :
This is the spot; here is the Rootli.

[*They enter with torches.*

Hark !

WINKELRIED.
SEWA. The coast is clear.

MEYER. None of our comrades come?

We are the first, we Unterwaldeners.

MELCH. How far is't i' the night?

BAUM. The beacon watch

Upon the Selisberg has just called two.

[*A bell is heard at a distance.*

MEYER. Hush! Hark!

BUHEL. The forest chapel's matin bell

Chimes clearly o'er the lake from Switzerland.

VON F. The air is clear, and bears the sound so far.

MELCH. Go, you and you, and light some broken boughs,
Let's bid them welcome with a cheerful blaze.

[*Two peasants exeunt.*

SEWA. The moon shines fair to-night. Beneath its beams
The lake reposes, bright as burnish'd steel.

BUHEL. They'll have an easy passage.

WINK. (*pointing to the lake*). Ha! look there!
See you nothing?

MEYER. What is it? Ay, indeed!

— A rainbow in the middle of the night.

MELCH. Formed by the bright reflection of the moon!

VON F. A sign most strange and wonderful, indeed!
Many there be, who ne'er have seen the like.

SEWA. 'Tis doubled, see, a paler one above!

BAUM. A boat is gliding yonder right beneath it.

MELCH. That must be Werner Stauffacher! I knew
The worthy patriot would not tarry long.

[*Goes with BAUMGARTEN towards the shore.*

MEYER. The Uri men are like to be the last.

BUHEL. They're forced to take a winding circuit through
The mountains; for the Viceroy's spies are out.

[*In the meanwhile the two peasants have kindled
a fire in the centre of the stage.*

MELCH. (*on the shore*).

Who's there? The word?

STAUFF. (*from below*). Friends of the country.

[*All retire up the stage, towards the party landing
from the boat. Enter STAUFFACHER, ITEL RED-
ING, HANS AUF DER MAUER, JORG IM HOFE,
CONRAD HUNN, ULRICH DER SCHMIDT, JOST VON
WEILER, and three other peasants, armed.*

ALL

Welcome!

[*While the rest remain behind exchanging greetings, MELCHTHAL comes forward with STAUFFACHER.*

MELCH. Oh worthy Stauffacher, I've look'd
On him, who could not look on me again.
I've laid my hands upon his rayless eyes,
And on their vacant orbits sworn a vow
Of vengeance, only to be cool'd in blood.

STAUFF. Speak not of vengeance. We are here, to meet
The threatened evil, not to avenge the past.
Now tell me what you've done, and what secured,
To aid the common cause in Unterwald,
How stand the peasantry disposed, and how
Yourself escaped the wiles of treachery?

MELCH. Through the Surenen's fearful mountain chain,
Where dreary ice-fields stretch on every side,
And sound is none, save the hoarse vulture's cry,
I reach'd the Alpine pasture, where the herds
From Uri and from Engelberg resort,
And turn their cattle forth to graze in common..
Still as I went along, I slaked my thirst
With the coarse oozings of the lofty glacier,
That thro' the crevices come foaming down,
And turned to rest me in the herdsmen's cots*,
Where I was host and guest, until I gain'd
The cheerful homes and social haunts of men.
Already through these distant vales had spread
The rumour of this last atrocity;
And wheresoe'er I went, at every door,
Kind words and gentle looks were there to greet me
I found these simple spirits all in arms
Against our rulers' tyrannous encroachments.
For as their Alps through each succeeding year
Yield the same roots,—their streams flow ever on
In the same channels,—nay, the clouds and winds
The selfsame course unchangeably pursue,

* These are the cots, or shealings, erected by the herdsmen for shelter, while pasturing their herds on the mountains during the summer. These are left deserted in winter, during which period Melchthal's journey was taken.

So have old customs there, from sire to son,
 Been handed down, unchanging and unchanged ;
 Nor will they brook to change or turn aside
 From the fixed even tenor of their life.
 With grasp of their hard hands they welcomed me,—
 Took from the walls their rusty falchions down,—
 And from their eyes the soul of valour flash'd
 With joyful lustre, as I spoke those names,
 Sacred to every peasant in the mountains,
 Your own and Walter Fürst's. Whate'er your voice
 Should dictate as the right, they swore to do ;
 And you they swore to follow e'en to death.
 — So sped I on from house to house, secure
 In the guest's sacred privilege ;—and when
 I reached at last the valley of my home,
 Where dwell my kinsmen, scatter'd far and near—
 When I did find my father, stript and blind,
 Upon the stranger's straw, fed by the alms
 Of charity—

STAUFFACHER.

Great Heaven !

MELCHTHAL.

Yet wept I not !

No—not in weak and unavailing tears
 Spent I the force of my fierce burning anguish ;
 Deep in my bosom, like some precious treasure,
 I lock'd it fast, and thought on deeds alone.
 Through every winding of the hills I crept,—
 No valley so remote but I explored it ;
 Nay, even at the glacier's ice-clad base,
 I sought and found the homes of living men ;
 And still, where'er my wandering footsteps turn'd,
 The selfsame hatred of these tyrants met me.
 For even there, at vegetation's verge,
 Where the numb'd earth is barren of all fruits,
 Their grasping hands had been stretch'd forth for
 plunder.

Into the hearts of all this honest race,
 The story of my wrongs struck deep, and now
 They, to a man, are ours ; both heart and hand.

STAUFF. Great things, indeed, you've wrought in little time.

MELCH. I did still more than this. The fortresses;

Rossberg and Sarnen, are the country's dread;
 For from behind their rocky walls the foe
 Swoops, as the eagle from his eyrie, down,
 And, safe himself, spreads havoc o'er the land.
 With my own eyes I wish'd to weigh its strength,
 So went to Sarnen, and explored the castle.

STAUFF. How! Risk thyself e'en in the tiger's den?

MELCH. Disguised in pilgrim's weeds I entered it;
 I saw the Viceroy feasting at his board—
 Judge if I'm master of myself or no!
 I saw the tyrant, and I slew him not!

STAUFF. Fortune, indeed, has smiled upon your boldness.

[*Meanwhile the others have arrived and join MELCHTHAL and STAUFFACHER.*

Yet tell me now, I pray, who are the friends,
 The worthy men, who came along with you?
 Make me acquainted with them, that we may
 Speak frankly, man to man, and heart to heart.

MEYER. In the three Cantons, who, sir, knows not you?
 Meyer of Sarnen is my name; and this
 Is Struth of Winkelried, my sister's son.

STAUFF. No unknown name. A Winkelried it was,
 Who slew the dragon in the fen at Weilor,
 And lost his life in the encounter, too.

WINK. That, Master Stauffacher, was my grandfather.

MELCH. (*pointing to two peasants*).
 These two are men belonging to the convent
 Of Engelberg, and live behind the forest.
 You'll not think ill of them, because they're serfs,
 And sit not free upon the soil, like us.
 They love the land, and bear a good repute.

STAUFFACHER (*to them*).
 Give me your hands. He has good cause for thanks,
 That unto no man owes his body's service.

But worth is worth, no matter where 'tis found.

HUNN. That is Herr Reding, sir, our old Landamman.

MEYER. I know him well. There is a suit between us,
 About a piece of ancient heritage.
 Herr Reding, we are enemies in court,
 Here we are one.

[*Shakes his hand.*

- STAUFFACHER. That's well and bravely said.
- WINK. Listen ! They come. Hark to the horn of Uri !
 [On the right and left armed men are seen descending
 ing the rocks with torches.
- MAUER. Look, is not that God's pious servant there ?
 A worthy priest ! The terrors of the night,
 And the way's pains and perils scare not him,
 A faithful shepherd caring for his flock.
- BAUM. The Sacrist follows him, and Walter Fürst.
 But where is Tell ? I do not see him there.
- [WALTER FURST, ROSELLEMAN the Pastor, PETER-
 MANN the Sacrist, KUONI the Shepherd, WERNI
 the Huntsman, RUGDI the Fisherman, and five
 other countrymen, thirty-three in all, advance
 and take their places round the fire.
- FURST. Thus must we, on the soil our fathers left us,
 Creep forth by stealth to meet like murderers,
 And in the night, that should her mantle lend
 Only to crime and black conspiracy,
 Assert our own good rights, which yet are clear
 As is the radiance of the noonday sun.
- MELCH. So be it. What is woven in gloom of night
 Shall free and boldly meet the morning light.
- ROSEL. Confederates ! listen to the words which God
 Inspires my heart withal. Here we are met,
 To represent the general weal. In us
 Is all the people of the land convened.
 Then let us hold the Diet, as of old,
 And as we're wont in peaceful times to do.
 The time's necessity be our excuse,
 If there be aught informal in this meeting.
 Still, wheresoe'er men strike for justice, there
 Is God, and now beneath his heav'n we stand.
- STAUFF. 'Tis well advised.—Let us, then, hold the Diet,
 According to our ancient usages.—
 Though it be night, there's sunshine in our cause.
- MELCH. Few though our numbers be, the hearts are here
 Of the whole people ; here the best are met.
- HUNN. The ancient books may not be near at hand,
 Yet are they graven in our inmost hearts.

ROSSEL. 'Tis well. And now, then, let a ring be formed,
And plant the swords of power within the ground*.

MAUER. Let the Landamman step into his place,
And by his side his secretaries stand.

SACRIST. There are three Cantons here. Which hath the right
To give the head to the united Council?
Schwytz may contest that dignity with Uri,
We Unterwald'ners enter not the field.

MELCH. We stand aside. We are but suppliants here,
Invoking aid from our more potent friends.

STAUFF. Let Uri have the sword. Her banner takes,
In battle, the precedence of our own.

FURST. Schwytz, then, must share the honour of the sword;
For she's the honoured ancestor of all.

ROSSEL. Let me arrange this generous controversy.
Uri shall lead in battle—Schwytz in Council.

FURST (*gives STAUFFACHER his hand*).
Then take your place.

STAUFFACHER. Not I. Some older man.

HOFE. Ulrich, the Smith, is the most aged here.

MAUER. A worthy man, but he is not a freeman;
—No bondman can be judge in Switzerland.

STAUFF. Is not Herr Reding here, our old Landamman?

Where can we find a worthier man than he?

FURST. Let him be Amman and the Diet's chief!
You that agree with me, hold up your hands!

[All hold up their right hands.]

REDING (*stepping into the centre*).

I cannot lay my hands upon the books;
But by yon everlasting stars I swear,
Never to swerve from justice and the right.

*[The two swords are placed before him, and a circle
formed; Schwytz in the centre, Uri on his right,
Unterwald on his left.]*

REDING (*resting on his battle sword*).

Why, at the hour when spirits walk the earth,
Meet the three Cantons of the mountains here,

* It was the custom at the Meetings of the Landes Gemeinde, or Diet, to set swords upright in the ground as emblems of authority.

Upon the lake's inhospitable shore?
And what the purport of the new alliance
We here contract beneath the starry Heaven?

STAUFFACHER (*entering the circle*).

No new alliance do we now contract,
But one our fathers framed, in ancient times,
We purpose to renew! For know, confederates,
Though mountain ridge and lake divide our bounds,
And every Canton's ruled by its own laws,
Yet are we but one race, born of one blood,
And all are children of one common home

WINK. Then is the burden of our legends true,
That we came hither from a distant land?
Oh, tell us what you know, that our new league
May reap fresh vigour from the leagues of old.

STAUFF. Hear, then, what aged herdsmen tell. There dwelt
A mighty people in the land that lies
Back to the north. The scourge of famine came;
And in this strait 'twas publicly resolved,
That each tenth man, on whom the lot might fall,
Should leave the country. They obey'd—and forth,
With loud lamentings, men and women went,
A mighty host; and to the south moved on,
Cutting their way through Germany by the sword,
Until they gained these pine-clad hills of ours;
Nor stopp'd they ever on their forward course,
Till at the shaggy dell they halted, where
The Müta flows through its luxuriant meads.
No trace of human creature met their eye,
Save one poor hut upon the desert shore,
Where dwelt a lonely man, and kept the ferry.
A tempest raged—the lake rose mountains high,
And barr'd their further progress. Thereupon
They view'd the country—found it rich in wood,
Discover'd goodly springs, and felt as they
Were in their own dear native land once more.
Then they resolved to settle on the spot;
Erected there the ancient town of Schwytz;
And many a day of toil had they to clear
The tangled brake and forest's spreading roots.
Meanwhile their numbers grew, the soil became

Unequal to sustain them, and they cross'd
 To the black mountain, far as Weissland, where,
 Conceal'd behind eternal walls of ice,
 Another people speaks another tongue.
 They built the village Stanz, beside the Kernwald ;
 The village Altdorf, in the vale of Reuss ;
 Yet, ever mindful of their parent stem,
 The men of Schwytz, from all the stranger race,
 That since the first have settled in the land,
 Each other still recognize. Their hearts still know,
 And beat fraternally to kindred blood.

[Extends his hand right and left.]

MAUER. Ay, we are all one heart, one blood, one race !

ALL (joining hands).

We are one people, and will act as one.

STAUFF. The nations round us bear a foreign yoke ;

For they have yielded to the conqueror.

Nay, e'en within our frontiers may be found

Some, that owe villein service to a lord,

A race of bonded serfs from sire to son.

But we, the genuine race of ancient Swiss,

Have kept our freedom from the first till now.

Never to princes have we bow'd the knee ;

Freely we sought protection of the Empire.

ROSSEL. Freely we sought it—freely it was given.

'Tis so set down in Emperor Frederick's charter.

STAUFF. For the most free have still some feudal lord.

There must be still a chief, a judge supreme,

To whom appeal may lie, in case of strife.

And therefore was it, that our sires allow'd,

For what they had recover'd from the waste,

This honour to the Emperor, the lord

Of all the German and Italian soil ;

And, like the other free men of his realm,

Engaged to aid him with their swords in war ;

And this alone should be the free man's duty,

To guard the Empire that keeps guard for him.

MELCH. He's but a slave that would acknowledge more.

STAUFF. They followed, when the Heribann* went forth,

* The Heribann was a muster of warriors similar to the *arrière ban* France.

The imperial standard, and they fought its battles !
To Italy they march'd in arms, to place
The Cæsars' crown upon the Emperor's head.
But still at home they ruled themselves in peace,
By their own laws and ancient usages.
The Emperor's only right was to adjudge
The penalty of death ; and therefore named
Some mighty noble as his delegate,
That had no stake nor interest in the land
He was call'd in, when doom was to be pass'd,
And, in the face of day, pronounced decree,
Clear and distinctly, fearing no man's hate.
What traces here, that we are bondsmen ? Speak,
If there be any can gainsay my words !

HOFÉ. No ! You have spoken but the simple truth ;
We never stoop'd beneath a tyrant's yoke.

STAUFF. Even to the Emperor we refused obedience,
When he gave judgment in the church's favour ;
For when the Abbey of Einsiedlen claimed
The Alp our fathers and ourselves had grazed,
And showed an ancient charter, which bestowed
The land on them as being ownerless—
For our existence there had been concealed—
What was our answer ? This. “ The grant is void,
No Emperor can bestow what is our own :
And if the Empire shall deny us justice,
We can, within our mountains, right ourselves ! ”
Thus spake our fathers ! And shall we endure
The shame and infamy of this new yoke,
And from the vassal brook what never king
Dared, in the fulness of his power, attempt ?
This soil we have created for ourselves,
By the hard labour of our hands ; we've changed
The giant forest, that was erst the haunt
Of savage bears, into a home for man ;
Extirpated the dragon's brood, that wont
To rise, distent with venom, from the swamps ;
Rent the thick misty canopy that hung
Its blighting vapours on the dreary waste ;
Blasted the solid rock ; o'er the abyss
Thrown the firm bridge for the wayfaring man :

By the possession of a thousand years
 The soil is ours. And shall an alien lord,
 Himself a vassal, dare to venture here,
 On our own hearths insult us,—and attempt
 To forge the chains of bondage for our hands,
 And do us shame on our own proper soil?
 Is there no help against such wrong as this?

[Great sensation among the people.]

Yes! there's a limit to the despot's power!
 When the oppress'd looks round in vain for justice,
 When his sore burden may no more be borne,
 With fearless heart he makes appeal to Heaven,
 And thence brings down his everlasting rights,
 Which there abide, inalienably his,
 And indestructible as are the stars.
 Nature's primeval state returns again,
 Where man stands hostile to his fellow man;
 And if all other means shall fail his need,
 One last resource remains—his own good sword.
 Our dearest treasures call to us for aid,
 Against the oppressor's violence; we stand
 For country, home, for wives, for children here!

ALL (*clashing their swords*).

Here stand we for our homes, our wives, and
 children.

ROSELLEMAN (stepping into the circle).

Bethink ye well, before ye draw the sword.
 Some peaceful compromise may yet be made;
 Speak but one word, and at your feet you'll see
 The men who now oppress you. Take the terms
 That have been often tendered you; renounce
 The Empire, and to Austria swear allegiance!

MAUER. What says the priest? To Austria allegiance?

BUHEL. Hearken not to him!

WINKELRIED. 'Tis a traitor's counsel,
 His country's foe!

REDING. Peace, peace, confederates!

SERVA. Homage to Austria, after wrongs like these!

FLUE. Shall Austria extort from us by force,
 What we denied to kindness and entreaty?

MEYER. Then should we all be slaves, deservedly

MAUER. Yes! Let him forfeit all a Switzer's rights,
Who talks of yielding to the yoke of Austria!
I stand on this, Landamman. Let this be
The foremost of our laws!

MELCHTHAL. Even so! Whoe'er
Shall talk of tamely bearing Austria's yoke,
Let him be stripp'd of all his rights and honours;
And no man hence receive him at his hearth!

ALL (*raising their right hands*).

Agreed! Be this the law!

REDING (*after a pause*). The law it is.

KOSSEL. Now you are free—by this law you are free.

Never shall Austria obtain by force
What she has fail'd to gain by friendly suit.

WEIL. On with the order of the day! Proceed!

REDING. Confederates! Have all gentler means been tried?

Perchance the Emp'rор knows not of our wrongs;
It may not be his will that thus we suffer:
Were it not well to make one last attempt,
And lay our grievances before the throne,
Ere we unsheathe the sword? Force is at best
A fearful thing e'en in a righteous cause;
God only helps, when man can help no more.

STAUFF. (*to KONRAD HUNN*).

Here you can give us information. Speak!

HUNN. I was at Rheinfeld, at the Emperor's palace,
Deputed by the Cantons to complain
Of the oppressions of these governors,
And claim the charter of our ancient freedom,
Which each new king till now has ratified.
I found the envoys there of many a town,
From Suabia and the valley of the Rhine,
Who all received their parchments as they wish'd,
And straight went home again with merry heart.
They sent for me, your envoy, to the council,
Where I was soon dismiss'd with empty comfort;
“The Emperor at present was engaged;
Some other time he would attend to us!”
I turn'd away, and passing through the hall,
With heavy heart, in a recess I saw

The Grand Duke John * in tears, and by his side
 The noble lords of Wart and Tegerfeld,
 Who beckon'd me, and said, " Redress yourselves,
 Expect not justice from the Emperor.
 Does he not plunder his own brother's child,
 And keep from him his just inheritance ?
 The Duke claims his maternal property,
 Urging he's now of age, and 'tis full time
 That he should rule his people and dominions ;
 What is the answer made to him ? The king
 Places a chaplet on his head ; " Behold
 The fitting ornament," he cries, " of youth !"

MAUER. You hear. Expect not from the Emperor
 Or right or justice ! Then redress yourselves !

REDING. No other course is left us. Now, advise
 What plan most likely to ensure success.

FURST. To shake a thralldom off that we abhor,
 To keep our ancient rights inviolate,
 As we received them from our fathers,—this,
 Not lawless innovation, is our aim.
 Let Cæsar still retain what is his due ;
 And he that is a vassal, let him pay
 The service he is sworn to faithfully.

MEYER. I hold my land of Austria in fief.

FURST. Continue, then, to pay your feudal service.

WEIL. I'm tenant of the lords of Rappersweil.

FURST. Continue, then, to pay them rent and tithe.

ROSSEL. Of Zurich's Lady I'm the humble vassal.

FURST. Give to the cloister, what the cloister claims.

STAUFF. The Empire only is my feudal lord.

FURST. What needs must be, we'll do, but nothing further.

We'll drive these tyrants and their minions hence,
 And raze their towering strongholds to the ground,
 Yet shed, if possible, no drop of blood.

Let the Emperor see, that we were driven to cast
 The sacred duties of respect away ;

And when he finds we keep within our bounds,
 His wrath, belike, may yield to policy ;

* The Duke of Suabia, who soon afterwards assassinated his uncle, for withholding his patrimony from him.

For truly is that nation to be fear'd,
That, when in arms, is temp'rate in its wrath.

REDING. But prithee tell us how may this be done?
The enemy is arm'd as well as we,
And, rest assured, he will not yield in peace.

STAUFF. He will, whene'er he sees us up in arms ;
We shall surprise him, ere he is prepared.

MEYER. 'Tis easily said, but not so easily done.
Two fortresses of strength command the country—
They shield the foe, and should the King invade us,
The task would then be dangerous indeed.
Rossberg and Sarnen both must be secured,
Before a sword is drawn in either Canton.

STAUFF. Should we delay the foe will soon be warned ;
We are too numerous for secrecy.

MEYER. There is no traitor in the Forest States.

ROSSEL. But even zeal may heedlessly betray.

FURST. Delay it longer, and the keep at Altdorf
Will be complete,—the governor secure.

MEYER. You think but of yourselves.

SACRISTAN. You are unjust !

MEYER. Unjust ! said you ? Dares Uri taunt us so ?

REDING. Peace, on your oath !

MEYER. If Schwytz be leagued with Uri,
Why, then, indeed, we must perforce be silent.

REDING. And let me tell you, in the Diet's name,
Your hasty spirit much disturbs the peace.

Stand we not all for the same common cause ?

WINK. What, if we delay till Christmas ? 'Tis then
The custom for the serfs to throng the castle,
Bringing the governor their annual gifts.

Thus may some ten or twelve selected men
Assemble unobserved, within its walls,
Bearing about their persons pikes of steel,
Which may be quickly mounted upon staves,
For arms are not admitted to the fort.

The rest can fill the neigh'ring wood, prepared
To sally forth upon a trumpet's blast,
Whene'er their comrades have secured the gate ;
And thus the castle will be ours with ease.

MELCH. The Rossberg I will undertake to scale,

I have a sweetheart in the garrison,
 Whom with some tender words I could persuade
 To lower me at night a hempen ladder.

Once up, my friends will not be long behind.

REDING. Are all resolved in favour of delay?

[*The majority raise their hands.*

STAUFF. (*counting them*).

Twenty to twelve is the majority.

FURST. If on the appointed day the castles fall,
 From mountain on to mountain we shall pass
 The fiery signal: in the capital
 Of every Canton quickly rouse the Landsturm*.
 Then, when these tyrants see our martial front,
 Believe me, they will never make so bold
 As risk the conflict, but will gladly take
 Safe conduct forth beyond our boundaries.

STAUFF. Not so with Gessler. He will make a stand.
 Surrounded with his dread array of horse,
 Blood will be shed before he quits the field,
 And even expell'd he'd still be terrible.
 'Tis hard, indeed 'tis dangerous, to spare him.

BAUM. Place me where'er a life is to be lost;
 I owe my life to Tell, and cheerfully
 Will pledge it for my country. I have clear'd
 My honour, and my heart is now at rest.

REDING. Counsel will come with circumstance. Be patient!
 Something must still be trusted to the moment.
 Yet, while by night we hold our Diet here,
 The morning, see, has on the mountain tops
 Kindled her glowing beacon Let us part,
 Ere the broad sun surprise us.

FURST. Do not fear.

The night wanes slowly from these vales of ours.

[*All have involuntarily taken off their caps, and
 contemplate the breaking of day, absorbed in
 silence.*

ROSSEL. By this fair light which greeteth us, before
 Those other nations, that, beneath us far,
 In noisome cities pent, draw painful breath,

Swear we the oath of our confederacy !
 We swear to be a nation of true brothers,
 Never to part in danger or in death !

[They repeat his words with three fingers raised.
 We swear we shall be free, as were our sires,
 And sooner die than live in slavery !

[All repeat as before.
 We swear to put our trust in God Most High,
 And not to quail before the might of man !

[All repeat as before, and embrace each other.

STAUFF. Now every man pursue his several way
 Back to his friends, his kindred, and his home.
 Let the herd winter up his flock, and gain,
 In silence, friends for our confederacy !
 What for a time must be endured, endure,
 And let the reckoning of the tyrants grow,
 Till the great day arrive, when they shall pay
 The general and particular debt at once.
 Let every man control his own just rage,
 And nurse his vengeance for the public wrongs:
 For he whom selfish interests now engage,
 Defrauds the general weal of its just claims.

[As they are going off in profound silence, in
 three different directions, the orchestra plays a
 solemn air. The empty scene remains open for
 some time, showing the rays of the sun rising
 over the Glaciers.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Court before TELL's house. TELL with an axe. HEDWIG engaged in her domestic duties. WALTER and WILHELM in the back-ground, playing with a little cross-bow.

(WALTER sings).
 With his cross-bow, and his quiver,
 The huntsman speeds his way,
 Over mountain, dale, and river,
 At the dawning of the day.

As the eagle, on wild pinion,
 Is the king in realms of air,
 So the hunter claims dominion
 Over crag and forest lair.

Far as ever bow can carry,
 Thro' the trackless airy space,
 All he sees he makes his quarry,
 Soaring bird and beast of chase.

WILHELM (*runs forward*).

My string has snapt! Wilt mend it for me, father?

TELL. Not I; a true-born archer helps himself. [*Boys retire.*]

HEDW. The boys begin to use the bow betimes.

TELL. 'Tis early practice only makes the master.

HEDW. Ah! Would to Heaven they never learnt the art!

TELL. But they shall learn it, wife, in all its points.

Whoe'er would carve an independent way
 Through life, must learn to ward or plant a blow.

HEDW. Alas, alas! and they will never rest
 Contentedly at home.

TELL. No more can I!

I was not framed by nature for a shepherd.

Restless I must pursue a shifting aim;

I only feel the flush and joy of life,

In starting some fresh quarry every day

HEDW. Heedless the while of all your wife's alarms,
 As she sits watching through long hours at home.

For my soul sinks with terror at the tales

The servants tell about your wild adventures.

Whene'er we part, my trembling heart forebodes,
 That you will ne'er come back to me again.

I see you on the frozen mountain steeps,
 Missing, perchance, your leap from cliff to cliff.

I see the chamois, with a wild rebound,

Drag you down with him o'er the precipice.

I see the avalanche close o'er your head,—

The treacherous ice give way, and you sink down
 Intombed alive within its hideous gulf.

Ah! in a hundred varying forms does death

Pursue the Alpine huntsman on his course.

That way of life can surely ne'er be blessed,
 Where life and limb are perill'd every hour.

TELL. The man that bears a quick and steady eye,
And trusts to God, and his own lusty sinews,
Passes, with scarce a scar, through every danger.
The mountain cannot awe the mountain child.

[*Having finished his work, he lays aside his tools*
And now, methinks, the door will hold awhile.—
The axe at home oft saves the carpenter.

[*Takes his cap.*

HEDW. Whither away?

TELL. To Altdorf, to your father.

HEDW. You have some dangerous enterprise in view?
Confess!

TELL. Why think you so?

HEDWIG. Some scheme's on foot,
Against the governors. There was a Diet
Held on the Rootli—that I know—and you
Are one of the confederacy, I'm sure.

TELL. I was not there. Yet will I not hold back,
Whene'er my country calls me to her aid.

HEDW. Wherever danger is, will you be placed.
On you, as ever, will the burden fall.

TELL. Each man shall have the post that fits his powers.

HEDW. You took—ay, 'mid the thickest of the storm—
The man of Unterwald across the lake.

'Tis a marvel you escaped. Had you no thought
Of wife and children, then?

TELL. Dear wife, I had;
And therefore saved the father for his children.

HEDW. To brave the lake in all its wrath! 'Twas not
To put your trust in God! 'Twas tempting him.

TELL. The man that's over cautious will do little.

HEDW. Yes, you've a kind and helping hand for all;
But be in straits, and who will lend you aid?

TELL. God grant I ne'er may stand in need of it!

[*Takes up his crossbow and arrows.*

HEDW. Why take your crossbow with you? Leave it here.

TELL. I want my right hand, when I want my bow.

[*The boys return.*

WALT. Where, father, are you going?

TELL. To grand-dad, boy—
To Altdorf. Will you go?

WALTER.

Ay, that I will!

HEDW. The Viceroy's there just now. Go not to Altdorf!

TELL. He leaves to-day.

HEDWIG.

Then let him first be gone.

Cross not his path.—You know he bears us grudge.

TELL. His ill-will cannot greatly injure me.

I do what's right, and care for no man's hate.

HEDW. 'Tis those who do what's right, whom most he hates.

TELL. Because he cannot reach them. Me, I ween,

His knightship will be glad to leave in peace.

HEDW. Ay!—Are you sure of that?

TELL.

Not long ago,

As I was hunting through the wild ravines
Of Shechenthal, untrod by mortal foot,—

There, as I took my solitary way

Along a shelving ledge of rocks, where 'twas
Impossible to step on either side;

For high above rose, like a giant wall,

The precipice's side, and far below

The Shechen thunder'd o'er its rifted bed;—

*[The boys press towards him, looking upon him
with excited curiosity.]*

There, face to face, I met the Viceroy. He

Alone with me—and I myself alone—

Mere man to man, and near us the abyss.

And when his lordship had perused my face,

And knew the man he had severely fined

On some most trivial ground, not long before;

And saw me, with my sturdy bow in hand,

Come striding t'wards him, then his cheek grew pale,

His knees refused their office, and I thought

He would have sunk against the mountain side.

Then, touch'd with pity for him, I advanced,

Respectfully, and said, " 'Tis I, my lord."

But ne'er a sound could he compel his lips

To frame in answer. Only with his hand

He beckoned me in silence to proceed.

So I pass'd on, and sent his train to seek him.

HEDW. He trembled then before you? Woe the while

You saw his weakness; that he'll ne'er forgive.

TELL. I shun him, therefore, and he'll not seek me.

HEDW. But stay away to-day. Go hunting rather!

TELL. What do you fear?

HEDWIG. I am uneasy. Stay.

TELL. Why thus distress yourself without a cause?

HEDW. Because there is no cause. Tell, Tell! stay here!

TELL. Dear wife, I gave my promise I would go.

HEDW. Must you,—then go. But leave the boys with me.

WALT. No, mother dear, I'm going with my father.

HEDW. How, Walter! will you leave your mother then?

WALT. I'll bring you pretty things from grandpapa.

[Exit with his father.

WILH. Mother, I'll stay with you!

HEDWIG (embracing him). Yes, yes! thou art

My own dear child. Thou'rt all that's left to me.

[She goes to the gate of the court, and looks
anxiously after TELL and her son for a con-
siderable time.

SCENE II.

*A retired part of the Forest.—Brooks dashing in spray over
the rocks.*

Enter BERTHA in a hunting dress. Immediately afterwards
RUDENZ.

BERTH. He follows me. Now to explain myself!

RUDENZ (entering hastily).

At length, dear lady, we have met alone.

In this wild dell, with rocks on every side,

No jealous eye can watch our interview.

Now let my heart throw off this weary silence.

BERTH. But are you sure they will not follow us?

RUD. . . See, yonder goes the chase. Now, then, or never!

I must avail me of the precious moment,—

Must hear my doom decided by thy lips,

Though it should part me from thy side for ever.

Oh, do not arm that gentle face of thine

With looks so stern and harsh! Who—who am I,

That dare aspire so high, as unto thee?

Fame hath not stamp'd me yet; nor may I take

My place amid the courtly throng of knights,
That, crown'd with glory's lustre, woo thy smiles.
Nothing have I to offer, but a heart
That overflows with truth and love for thee.

BERTHA (*sternly and with severity*).

And dare you speak to me of love—of truth?
You, that are faithless to your nearest ties!
You, that are Austria's slave—bartered and sold
To her—an alien, and your country's tyrant!

RUD. . . How! This reproach from thee! Whom do I seek,
On Austria's side, my own beloved, but thee?

BERTH. Think you to find me in the traitor's ranks?

Now, as I live, I'd rather give my hand
To Gessler's self, all despot though he be,
Than to the Switzer who forgets his birth,
And stoops to be the minion of a tyrant.

RUD. . . Oh heaven, what must I hear!

BERTHA. Say! what can lie
Nearer the good man's heart, than friends and
kindred?

What dearer duty to a noble soul,
Than to protect weak, suffering innocence,
And vindicate the rights of the oppress'd?
My very soul bleeds for your countrymen.
I suffer with them, for I needs must love them;
They are so gentle, yet so full of power;
They draw my whole heart to them. Every day
I look upon them with increased esteem.
But you, whom nature and your knightly vow,
Have given them as their natural protector,
Yet who desert them and abet their foes,
In forging shackles for your native land,
You—you it is, that deeply grieve and wound me.
I must constrain my heart, or I shall hate you.

RUD. . . Is not my country's welfare all my wish?
What seek I for her, but to purchase peace
'Neath Austria's potent sceptre?

BERTHA. Bondage, rather!
You would drive freedom from the last stronghold
That yet remains for her upon the earth.

The people know their own true int'rests better :
 Their simple natures are not warp'd by show.
 But round your head a tangling net is wound.

RUD. . . Bertha, you hate me—you despise me !

BERTHA. Nay !

And if I did, 'twere better for my peace.
 But to see him despised and despicable,—
 The man whom one might love—

RUDENZ. Oh, Bertha ! You
 Show me the pinnacle of heavenly bliss,
 Then, in a moment, hurl me to despair !

BERTH. No, no ! the noble is not all extinct
 Within you. It but slumbers,—I will rouse it.
 It must have cost you many a fiery struggle,
 To crush the virtues of your race within you.
 But, Heaven be praised, 'tis mightier than yourself,
 And you are noble in your own despite !

RUD. . . You trust me, then ? Oh, Bertha, with thy love
 What might I not become !

BERTHA. Be only that
 For which your own high nature destin'd you.
 Fill the position you were born to fill ;—
 Stand by your people and your native land—
 And battle for your sacred rights !

RUDENZ. Alas !
 How can I hope to win you—to possess you,
 If I take arms against the Emperor ?
 Will not your potent kinsmen interpose,
 To dictate the disposal of your hand ?

BERTH. All my estates lie in the Forest Cantons ;
 And I am free, when Switzerland is free.

RUD. . . Oh ! what a prospect, Bertha, hast thou shown me !

BERTH. Hope not to win my hand by Austria's favour ;
 Fain would they lay their grasp on my estates,
 To swell the vast domains which now they hold.
 The selfsame lust of conquest, that would rob
 You of your liberty, endangers mine.
 Oh, friend, I'm mark'd for sacrifice ;—to be
 The guerdon of some parasite, perchance !
 They'll drag me hence to the Imperial court,
 That hateful haunt of falsehood and intrigue ;

There do detested marriage bonds await me.

Love, love alone,—your love can rescue me.

RUD. . . And thou couldst be content, love, to live here ;
 In my own native land to be my own ?
 Oh, Bertha, all the yearnings of my soul
 For this great world and its tumultuous strife,
 What were they, but a yearning after thee ?
 In glory's path I sought for thee alone,
 And all my thirst of fame was only love.
 But if in this calm vale thou canst abide
 With me, and bid earth's pomps and pride adieu,
 Then is the goal of my ambition won ;
 And the rough tide of the tempestuous world
 May dash and rave around these firm-set hills !
 No wandering wishes more have I to send
 Forth to the busy scene that stirs beyond.
 Then may these rocks, that girdle us, extend
 Their giant walls impenetrably round,
 And this sequestered happy vale alone
 Look up to heaven, and be my paradise !

BERTH. Now art thou all my fancy dream'd of thee.
 My trust has not been given to thee in vain.

RUD. . . Away, ye idle phantoms of my folly !
 In mine own home J'll find my happiness.
 Here, where the gladsome boy to manhood grew,
 Where ev'ry brook, and tree, and mountain peak,
 Teems with remembrances of happy hours,
 In mine own native land thou wilt be mine.
 Ah, I have ever loved it well, I feel.
 How poor without it were all earthly joys.

BERTH. Where should we look for happiness on earth,
 If not in this dear land of innocence ?
 Here, where old truth hath its familiar home,
 Where fraud and guile are strangers, envy ne'er
 Shall dim the sparkling fountain of our bliss,
 And ever bright the hours shall o'er us glide.
 There do I see thee, in true manly worth,
 The foremost of the free and of thy peers,
 Revered with homage pure and unconstrain'd,
 Wielding a power that kings might envy thee.

RUD. . . And thee I see, thy sex's crowning gem,

With thy sweet woman grace and wakeful love,
 Building a heaven for me within my home,
 And, as the spring-time scatters forth her flowers,
 Adorning with thy charms my path of life,
 And spreading joy and sunshine all around.

BERTH. And this it was, dear friend, that caused my grief,
 To see thee blast this life's supremest bliss,
 With thine own hand. Ah ! what had been my fate,
 Had I been forced to follow some proud lord,
 Some ruthless despot, to his gloomy castle !
 Here are no castles, here no bastion'd walls
 Divide me from a people I can bless.

RUD. . . Yet, how to free myself ; to loose the coils
 Which I have madly twined around my head ?

BERTH. Tear them asunder with a man's resolve.
 Whatever the event, stand by thy people.

i It is thy post by birth.

[*Hunting horns are heard in the distance.*

But hark ! The chase !

Farewell,—'tis needful we should part—away !
 Fight for thy land ; thou fightest for thy love.
 One foe fills all our souls with dread ; the blow
 That makes one free, emancipates us all.

[*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE III.

A meadow near Altdorf. Trees in the fore-ground. At the back of the stage a cap upon a pole. The prospect is bounded by the Bannberg, which is surmounted by a snow-capped mountain.

FRIESSHARDT and LEUTHOLD on guard.

FRIESS. We keep our watch in vain. There's not a soul
 Will pass, and do obeisance to the cap.
 But yesterday the place swarm'd like a fair ;
 Now the whole green looks like a very desert,
 Since yonder scarecrow hung upon the pole.

LEUTH. Only the vilest rabble show themselves,
 And wave their tattered caps in mockery at us.
 All honest citizens would sooner make
 A tedious circuit over half the town,

Than bend their backs before our master's cap.

FRIESS. They were obliged to pass this way at noon,
As they were coming from the Council House.
I counted then upon a famous catch,
For no one thought of bowing to the cap.
But Rosselmann, the priest, was even with me :
Coming just then from some sick penitent,
He stands before the pole,—raises the Host—
The Sacrist, too, must tinkle with his bell.—
When down they dropp'd on knee—myself and all,
In reverence to the Host, but not the cap.

LEUTH. Hark ye, companion, I have a shrewd suspicion,
Our post's no better than the pillory.
It is a burning shame, a trooper should
Stand sentinel before an empty cap,
And every honest fellow must despise us
To do obeisance to a cap, too ! Faith,
I never heard an order so absurd !

FRIESS. Why not, an't please thee, to an empty cap ?
Thou'st duck'd, I'm sure, to many an empty sconce.

[HILDEGARD, MECHTHILD, and ELSBETH enter
with their children, and station themselves
around the pole.]

LEUTH. And thou art an officious sneaking knave,
That's fond of bringing honest folks to trouble.
For my part, he that likes, may pass the cap :—
I'll shut my eyes and take no note of him.

MECH. There hangs the Viceroy ! Your obeisance, children !
Els. . . . I would to God he'd go, and leave his cap !
The country would be none the worse for it.

FRIESSHARDT (*driving them away*).
Out of the way ! Confounded pack of gossips !
Who sent for you ? Go, send your husbands here,
If they have courage to defy the order.

[TELL enters with his crossbow, leading his son
WALTER by the hand. They pass the hat without
noticing it, and advance to the front of the
stage.]

WALTER (*pointing to the Bannberg*).

Father, is't true, that on the mountain there,
The trees, if wounded with a hatchet, bleed ?

TELL. Who says so, boy?

WALTER. The master herdsman, father!

He tells us, there's a charm upon the trees,
And if a man shall injure them, the hand
That struck the blow will grow from out the grave.

TELL. There is a charm about them—that's the truth.
Dost see those glaciers yonder—those white horns—
That seem to melt away into the sky?

WALT. They are the peaks that thunder so at night,
And send the avalanches down upon us.

TELL. They are; and Altdorf long ago had been
Submerged beneath these avalanches' weight,
Did not the forest there above the town
Stand like a bulwark to arrest their fall.

WALTER (*after musing a little*).
And are there countries with no mountains, father?

TELL. Yes, if we travel downwards from our heights,
And keep descending in the rivers' courses,
We reach a wide and level country, where
Our mountain torrents brawl and foam no more,
And fair large rivers glide serenely on.
All quarters of the heaven may there be scann'd
Without impediment. The corn grows there
In broad and lovely fields, and all the land
Is fair as any garden to the view.

WALT. But, father, tell me, wherefore haste we not
Away to this delightful land, instead
Of toiling here, and struggling as we do?

TELL. The land is fair and bountiful as Heaven;
But they who till it, never may enjoy
The fruits of what they sow.

WALTER. Live they not free,
As you do, on the land their fathers left them?

TELL. The fields are all the bishop's or the king's.

WALT. But they may freely hunt among the woods?

TELL. The game is all the monarch's—bird and beast.

WALT. But they, at least, may surely fish the streams?

TELL. Stream, lake, and sea, all to the king belong.

WALT. Who is this king, of whom they're so afraid?

TELL. He is the man who fosters and protects them

- WALT. Have they not courage to protect themselves ?
 TELL. The neighbour there dare not his neighbour trust.
 WALT. I should want breathing room in such a land.
 I'd rather dwell beneath the avalanches.
 TELL. 'Tis better, child, to have these glacier peaks
 Behind one's back, than evil-minded men !
- [They are about to pass on.]
- WALT. See, father, see the cap on yonder pole !
 TELL. What is the cap to us ? Come, let's begone
 [As he is going, FRIESSHARDT, presenting his pike,
 stops him.]
- FRIESS. Stand, I command you, in the Emperor's name !
 TELL (seizing the pike). What would ye ? Wherefore do ye stop my path ?
 FRIESS. You've broke the mandate, and must go with us.
 LEUTH. You have not done obeisance to the cap.
 TELL. Friend, let me go.
 FRIESS. Away, away to prison !
 WALT. Father to prison ! Help !
- [Calling to the side scene.]
- This way, you men !
- Good people, help ! They're dragging him to prison !
 [RosseLMANN the Priest, and the SACEISTAN, with
 three other men, enter.]
- SACRIS. What's here amiss ?
 ROSS. Why do you seize this man ?
 FRIESS. He is an enemy of the King—a traitor.
 TELL (seizing him with violence). A traitor, I !
- ROSSELMANN. Friend, thou art wrong. 'Tis Tell,
 An honest man, and worthy citizen.
 WALTER (descries FURST and runs up to him). Grandfather, help, they want to seize my father !
 FRIESS. Away to prison !
 FURST (running in). Stay, I offer bail.
 For God's sake, Tell, what is the matter here ?
- [MELCHTHAL and STAUFFACHER enter.]
- LEUTH. He has contemn'd the Viceroy's sovereign power
 Refusing flatly to acknowledge it.
 STAUFF. Has Tell done this ?

MELCHTHAL. Villain, thou knowest 'tis false!

LEUTH. He has not made obeisance to the cap.

FURST. And shall for this to prison? Come, my friend,
Take my security, and let him go.

FRIESS. Keep your security for yourself—you'll need it.
We only do our duty. Hence with him.

MELCHTHAL (*to the country people*).

This is too bad—shall we stand by, and see them
Drag him away before our very eyes?

SACRIS. We are the strongest. Don't endure it, friends.
Our countrymen will back us to a man.

FRIESS. Who dares resist the governor's commands?

OTHER THREE PEASANTS (*running in*).
Well help you. What's the matter? Down with
them!

[HILDEGARD, MECHTHILD and ELSBETH return.

TELL. Go, go, good people, I can help myself.

Think you, had I a mind to use my strength,
These pikes of theirs should daunt me?

MELCHTHAL (*to FRIESSHARDT*). Only try—
Try, if you dare, to force him from amongst us.

FURST and STAUFFACHER.

Peace, peace, friends!

FRIESSHARDT (*loudly*). Riot! Insurrection, ho!
[*Hunting horns without*.

WOMEN. The Governor!

FRIESSHARDT (*raising his voice*). Rebellion! Mutiny!

STAUFF. Roar, till you burst, knave!

ROSSELMANN and MELCHTHAL. Will you hold your tongue?

FRIESSHARDT (*calling still louder*).

Help, help, I say, the servants of the law!

FURST. The Viceroy here! Then we shall smart for this!

[Enter GESSLER on horseback, with a falcon on
his wrist; RUDOLPH DER HARRAS, BERTHA, and
RUDENZ, and a numerous train of armed at-
tendants, who form a circle of lances round the
whole stage.

HAB. . . Room for the Viceroy!

GESSLER. Drive the clowns apart.

Why throng the people thus? Who calls for help?
[General silence.

Who was it? I will know.

[FRIESSHARDT steps forward.

And who art thou?

And why hast thou this man in custody?

[Gives his falcon to an attendant.

FRIESS. Dread sir, I am a soldier of your guard,
And station'd sentinel beside the cap;
This man I apprehended in the act
Of passing it without obeisance due,
So I arrested him, as you gave order
Whereon the people tried to rescue him.

GESSLER (*after a pause*).

And do you, Tell, so lightly hold your king
And me, who act as his vicegerent here,
That you refuse the greeting to the cap
I hung aloft to test your loyalty?
I read in this a disaffected spirit.

TELL. Pardon me, good my lord! The action sprung
From inadvertence,—not from disrespect.
Were I discreet, I were not William Tell:
Forgive me now—I'll not offend again.

GESSLER (*after a pause*).

I hear, Tell, you're a master with the bow,—
And bear the palm away from every rival.

WALT. That must be true, sir! At a hundred yards
He'll shoot an apple for you off the tree.

GESSL. Is that boy thine, Tell?

TELL. Yes, my gracious lord.

GESSL. Hast any more of them?

TELL. Two boys, my lord.

GESSL. And, of the two, which dost thou love the most

TELL. Sir, both the boys are dear to me alike.

GESSL. Then, Tell, since at a hundred yards thou canst
Bring down the apple from the tree, thou shalt
Approve thy skill before me. Take thy bow—
Thou hast it there at hand—and make thee ready
To shoot an apple from the stripling's head!
But take this counsel,—look well to thine aim,
See, that thou hitt'st the apple at the first,
For, shouldst thou miss, thy head shall pay the forfeit.

[All give signs of horror.

'TELL.. What monstrous thing, my lord, is this you ask ?
 That I, from the head of mine own child !—No, no !
 It cannot be, kind sir, you meant not that—
 God, in His grace, forbid ! You could not ask
 A father seriously to do that thing !

GESSL. Thou art to shoot an apple from his head !
 I do desire—command it so.

TELL. What I !

Level my crossbow at the darling head
 Of mine own child ? No—rather let me die !

GESSL. Or thou must shoot, or with thee dies the boy.

TELL. Shall I become the murd'rer of my child !
 You have no children, sir,—you do not know
 The tender throbings of a father's heart.

GESSL. How now, Tell, so discreet upon a sudden
 I had been told thou wert a visionary,—
 A wanderer from the paths of common men.
 Thou lov'st the marvellous. So have I now
 Cull'd out for thee a task of special daring.
 Another man might pause and hesitate ;—
 Thou dashest at it, heart and soul, at once.

BERTH. Oh, do not jest, my lord, with these poor souls !
 See, how they tremble, and how pale they look,
 So little used are they to hear thee jest.

GESSL. Who tells thee, that I jest ?

[*Grasping a branch above his head.*
Here is the apple.

Room there, I say ! And let him take his distance—
 Just eighty paces,—as the custom is,—
 Not an inch more or less ! It was his boast,
 That at a hundred he could hit his man.

Now, archer, to your task, and look you miss not !

HAR. . . Heavens ! this grows serious—down, boy, on your
 knees,

And beg the governor to spare your life.

FURST (*aside to MELCHTHAL, who can scarcely restrain his
 impatience.*)

Command yourself,—be calm, I beg of you !

BERTHA (*to the governor*).

Let this suffice you, sir ! It is inhuman

To trifle with a father's anguish thus.
 Although this wretched man had forfeited
 Both life and limb for such a slight offence,
 Already has he suffer'd tenfold death.
 Send him away uninjured to his home ;
 He'll know thee well in future ; and this hour
 He and his children's children will remember.

GESSL. Open a way there—quick ! Why this delay ?
 Thy life is forfeited ; I might despatch thee,
 And see I graciously repose thy fate
 Upon the skill of thine own practis'd hand.
 No cause has he to say his doom is harsh,
 Who's made the master of his destiny.
 Thou boastest of thy steady eye. 'Tis well !
 Now is a fitting time to show thy skill.
 The mark is worthy, and the prize is great.
 To hit the bull's eye in the target ;—that
 Can many another do as well as thou ;
 But he, methinks, is master of his craft,
 Who can at all times on his skill rely,
 Nor lets his heart disturb or eye or hand.

FURST. My lord, we bow to your authority ;
 But oh, let justice yield to mercy here.
 Take half my property, nay, take it all,
 But spare a father this unnatural doom !
WALT. Grandfather, do not kneel 'to that bad man !
 Say, where am I to stand ? I do not fear ;
 My father strikes the bird upon the wing,
 And will not miss now when 'twould harm his boy !

STAUFF. Does the child's innocence not touch your heart ?
ROSSEL. Bethink you, sir, there is a God in heaven,
 To whom you must account for all your deeds.

GESSLER (*pointing to the boy*). Bind him to yonder lime tree straight !

WALTER. Bind me ?
 No, I will not be bound ! I will be still,
 Still as a lamb—nor even draw my breath !
 But if you bind me, I can not be still.
 Then I shall writhe and struggle with my bonds.

HAR. . . . But let your eyes at least be bandaged, boy !

WALT. And why my eyes? No! Do you think I fear
 An arrow from my father's hand? Not I!
 I'll wait it firmly, nor so much as wink!
 Quick, father, show them that thou art an archer!
 He doubts thy skill—he thinks to ruin us.
 Shoot then, and hit, though but to spite the tyrant
 [He goes to the lime tree, and an apple is placed
 on his head.]

MELCHTHAL (*to the country people*).

What! Is this outrage to be perpetrated
 Before our very eyes? Where is our oath?

STAUFF. 'Tis all in vain. We have no weapons here;
 And see the wood of lances that surrounds us!

MELCH. Oh! would to Heaven that we had struck at once!
 God pardon those, who counsell'd the delay!

GESSLER (*to TELL*).

Now, to thy task! Men bear not arms for nought.
 'Tis dangerous to carry deadly weapons,
 And on the archer oft his shaft recoils.
 This right, these haughty peasant churls assume,
 Trenches upon their master's privileges.
 None should be armed, but those who bear command.
 It pleases you to wear the bow and bolt;—
 Well,—be it so. I shall provide the mark.

TELL (*bends the bow, and fixes the arrow*).

A lane there! Room!

STAUFFACHER. What, Tell? You would—no, no!
 You shake—your hand's unsteady—your knées tremble.

TELL (*letting the bow sink down*).

There's something swims before mine eyes!

WOMEN. Great Heaven

TELL. Release me from this shot! Here is my heart!
 [Tears open his breast.]

Summon your troopers—let them strike me down!

GESSL. I do not want thy life, Tell, but the shot.

Thy talent's universal! Nothing daunts thee!

Thou canst direct the rudder like the bow!

Storms fright not thee, when there's a life at stake:

Now, saviour, help thyself,—thou savest all!

[TELL stands fearfully agitated by contending

emotions, his hands moving convulsively, and his eyes turning alternately to the governor and Heaven. Suddenly he takes a second arrow from his quiver, and sticks it in his belt. The governor watches all these motions.

WALTER (*beneath the lime tree*).

Come, father, shoot! I'm not afraid!

TELL

It must be!

[Collects himself and levels the bow.

RUDENZ (*who all the while has been standing in a state of violent excitement, and has with difficulty restrained himself, advances*).

My lord, you will not urge this matter further.

You will not. It was surely but a test.

You've gained your object. Rigour push'd too far

Is sure to miss its aim, however good,

As snaps the bow that's all too straitly bent.

GESSL. Peace, till your counsel's ask'd for!

RUDENZ. I will speak!

Ay, and I dare! I reverence my king;

But acts like these must make his name abhor'd.

He sanctions not this cruelty. I dare

Avouch the fact. And you outstep your powers

In handling thus an unoffending people.

GESSL. Ha! thou grow'st bold, methinks!

RUDENZ. I have been dumb

To all the oppressions I was doom'd to see.

I've closed mine eyes, that they might not behold
them,

Bade my rebellious, swelling heart be still,

And pent its struggles down within my breast.

But to be silent longer, were to be

A traitor to my king and country both.

BERTILA (*casting herself between him and the governor*).

Oh Heavens! you but exasperate his rage!

RUD... My people I forsook—renounced my kindred—

Broke all the ties of nature, that I might

Attach myself to you. I madly thought,

That I should best advance the general weal,

By adding sinews to the Emperor's power.
 The scales have fallen from mine eyes—I see
 The fearful precipice on which I stand.
 You've led my youthful judgment far astray,—
 Deceived my honest heart. With best intent,
 I had well nigh achiev'd my country's ruin.

GESSL. Audacious boy, this language to thy lord?

RUD. . . . The Emperor is my lord, not you! I'm free
 As you by birth, and I can cope with you
 In every virtue that beseems a knight.
 And if you stood not here in that King's name,
 Which I respect e'en where 'tis most abused,
 I'd throw my gauntlet down, and you should give
 An answer to my gage in knightly fashion.
 Ay, beckon to your troopers! Here I stand;
 But not like these. [Pointing to the people:
 —unarmed. I have a sword,
 And he that stirs one step—

STAUFFACHER (exclaims). The apple's down!

[While the attention of the crowd has been directed
 to the spot where BERTHA had cast herself be-
 tween RUDENZ and GESSLER, TELL has shot.

ROSSEL. The boy's alive!

MANY VOICES. The apple has been struck!

[WALTER FURST staggers, and is about to fall.
 BERTHA supports him.

GESSLER (astonished).

How? Has he shot? The madman!

BERTHA. Worthy father!

Pray you, compose yourself. The boy's alive.

WALTER (runs in with the apple).

Here is the apple, father! Well I knew,
 You would not harm your boy.

[TELL stands with his body bent forwards, as
 though he would follow the arrow. His bow
 drops from his hand. When he sees the boy
 advancing, he hastens to meet him with open
 arms, and embracing him passionately sinks
 down with him quite exhausted. All crowd
 round them deeply affected.

BERTHA.

Oh, ye kind Heavens!

FURST (*to father and son*). My children, my dear children !
STAUFFACHER. God be praised !

LEUTH. Almighty powers ! That was a shot indeed !
It will be talked of to the end of time.

HAR. . . This feat of Tell, the archer, will be told
While yonder mountains stand upon their base.

[*Hands the apple to Gessler.*

GESSL. By Heaven ! the apple's cleft right through the core.
It was a master shot, I must allow.

ROSSEL. The shot was good. But woe to him, who drove
The man to tempt his God by such afeat !

STAUFF. Cheer up, Tell, rise ! You've nobly freed yourself,
And now may go in quiet to your home.

ROSSEL. Come, to the mother let us bear her son !

[*They are about to lead him off.*

GESSL. A word, Tell.

TELL. Sir, your pleasure ?

GESSLER. Thou didst place
A second arrow in thy belt—nay, nay !
I saw it well—what was thy purpose with it ?

TELL (*confused*). It is a custom with all archers, Sir.

GESSL. No, Tell, I cannot let that answer pass.

There was some other motive, well I know.
Frankly and cheerfully confess the truth ;—
Whate'er it be, I promise thee thy life,
Wherfore the second arrow ?

TELL. Well, my lord,
Since you have promised not to take my life,
I will, without reserve, declare the truth.
[*He draws the arrow from his belt, and fixes his eyes sternly upon the governor.*

If that my hand had struck my darling child,
This second arrow I had aimed at you,
And, be assured, I should not then have miss'd.

GESSL. Well, Tell, I promised thou shouldst have thy life ;
I gave my knightly word, and I will keep it.
Yet, as I knew the malice of thy thoughts,
I will remove thee hence to sure confinement,
Where neither sun nor moon shall reach thine eyes.
Thus from thy arrows I shall be secure.
Seize on him, guards, and bind him ! [*They bind him.*

STAUFFACHER. How, my lord—
 How can you treat in such a way a man,
 On whom God's hand has plainly been reveal'd ?

GESSL. Well, let us see if it will save him twice !
 Remove him to my ship ; I'll follow straight.
 In person I will see him lodged at Küssnacht.

ROSSEL. You dare not do't. Nor durst the Emperor's self
 So violate our dearest chartered rights.

GESSL. Where are they ? Has the Emp'r'or confirm'd them ?
 He never has. And only by obedience
 Need you expect to win that favour from him.
 You are all rebels 'gainst the Emp'r'or's power,—
 And bear a desperate and rebellious spirit.
 I know you all—I see you through and through.
 Him do I single from amongst you now,
 But in his guilt you all participate.
 The wise will study silence and obedience.

[Exit, followed by BERTHA, RUDENZ, HARRAS,
 and attendants. FRIESSHARDT and LEUTHOLD
 remain.

FURST (in violent anguish).

All's over now ! He is resolved, to bring
 Destruction on myself and all my house.

STAUFF. (to TELL). Oh, why did you provoke the tyrant's rage ?

TELL. Let him be calm who feels the pangs I felt.

STAUFF. Alas ! alas ! Our every hope is gone.

With you we all are fettered and enchain'd.

COUNTRY PEOPLE (surrounding TELL).

Our last remaining comfort goes with you !

LEUTH. (approaching him).

I'm sorry for you, Tell, but must obey.

TELL. Farewell !

WALTER TELL (clinging to him in great agony).

Oh, father, father, my dear father !

TELL (pointing to Heaven).

Thy father is on high—appeal to him !

STAUFF. Hast thou no message, Tell, to send thy wife ?

TELL. (clasping the boy passionately to his breast).

The boy's uninjured ; God will succour me !

[Tears himself suddenly away, and follows the soldiers of the guard.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

Eastern shore of the Lake of Lucerne; rugged and singularly shaped rocks close the prospect to the west. The lake is agitated, violent roaring and rushing of wind, with thunder and lightning at intervals.

KUNZ OF GERSAU, FISHERMAN and Boy.

KUNZ. I saw it with these eyes! Believe me, friend,
It happen'd all precisely as I've said.

FISHER. Tell made a prisoner and borne off to Küssnacht,
The best man in the land, the bravest arm,
Had we resolved to strike for liberty!

KUNZ. The Viceroy takes him up the lake in person:
They were about to go on board, as I
Left Flüelen; but still the gathering storm,
That drove me here to land so suddenly,
Perchance has hindered their abrupt departure.

FISHER. Our Tell in chains, and in the Viceroy's power!
O, trust me, Gessler will entomb him, where
He never more shall see the light of day;
For, Tell once free, the tyrant well might dread
The just revenge of one so deep incensed.

KUNZ. The old Landamman, too—von Attinghaus—
They say, is lying at the point of death.

FISHER. Then the last anchor of our hopes gives way!
He was the only man that dared to raise
His voice in favour of the people's rights.

KUNZ. The storm grows worse and worse. So, fare ye well!
I'll go and seek out quarters in the village.
There's not a chance of getting off to-day. [Exit.

FISHER. Tell dragg'd to prison, and the Baron dead!
Now, tyranny, exalt thy insolent front,—
Throw shame aside! The voice of truth is silenced,
The eye that watch'd for us, in darkness closed,
The arm that should have struck thee down, in chains!

Boy. . . 'Tis hailing hard—come, let us to the cottage!
This is no weather to be out in, father!

FISHER. Rage on, ye winds! Ye lightnings, flash your fires!
Burst, ye swollen clouds! Ye cataracts of Heaven,
Descend, and drown the country! In the germ,

Destroy the generations yet unborn !
 Ye savage elements, be lords of all !
 Return, ye bears ; ye ancient wolves, return
 To this wide howling waste ! The land is yours !
 Who would live here, when liberty is gone !

Boy. . . . Hark ! How the wind whistles, and the whirlpool roars ;
 I never saw a storm so fierce as this !

FISHER. To level at the head of his own child !
 Never had father such command before.
 And shall not nature, rising in wild wrath,
 Revolt against the deed ? I should not marvel,
 Though to the lake these rocks should bow their heads,
 Though yonder pinnacles, yon towers of ice,
 That, since creation's dawn, have known no thaw,
 Should, from their lofty summits, melt away.—
 Though yonder mountains, yon primeval cliffs,
 Should topple down, and a new deluge whelm
 Beneath its waves all living men's abodes !

[*Bells heard.*

Boy. . . . Hark, they are ringing on the mountain, yonder !
 They surely see some vessel in distress,
 And toll the bell that we may pray for it.

[*Ascends a rock.*

FISHER. Woe to the bark that now pursues its course,
 Rock'd in the cradle of these storm-tost waves !
 Nor helm nor steersman here can aught avail ;
 The storm is master. Man is like a ball,
 Toss'd twixt the winds and billows. Far or near,
 No haven offers him its friendly shelter !
 Without one ledge to grasp, the sheer smooth rocks
 Look down on his despair inhospitably,
 And only tender him their flinty breasts.

Boy (*calling from above*).

Father, a ship ; and bearing down from Flüelen !

FISHER. Heaven pity the poor wretches ! When the storm
 Is once entangled in this strait of ours,
 It rages like some savage beast of prey,
 Struggling against its cage's iron bars !
 Howling, it seeks an outlet—all in vain ;
 For the rocks hedge it round on every side,
 Walling the narrow pass as high as Heaven.

[*He ascends a cliff.*

Boy. . . It is the Governor of Uri's ship ;
By its red poop I know it, and the flag.

FISHER. Judgments of Heaven ! Yes, it is he himself.
It is the governor ! Yonder he sails,
And with him bears the burden of his crimes !
Soon has the arm of the avenger found him ;
Now over him he knows a mightier lord.
These waves yield no obedience to his voice,
These rocks bow not their heads before his cap.
Boy, do not pray ; stay not the Judge's arm !

Boy. . . I pray not for the governor—I pray
For Tell, who is on board the ship with him.

FISHER. Alas, ye blind, unreasoning elements !
Must ye, in punishing one guilty head,
Destroy the vessel and the pilot too ?

Boy. . . See, see, they've clear'd the Buggisgrat* ; but now
The blast, rebounding from the Devil's Minster *,
Has driven them back on the Great Axenberg *.
I cannot see them now.

FISHERMAN. The Hakmesser*.
Is there, that's founder'd many a gallant ship.
If they should fail to double that with skill,
Their bark will go to pieces on the rocks,
That hide their jagged peaks below the lake.
They have on board the very best of pilots.
If any man can save them, Tell is he ;
But he is manacled both hand and foot.

[Enter WILLIAM TELL., with his crossbow. He enters precipitately, looks wildly round, and testifies the most violent agitation. When he reaches the centre of the stage, he throws himself upon his knees, and stretches out his hands, first towards the earth, then towards Heaven.

Boy (*observing him*).
See, father ! Who is that man, kneeling yonder ?

FISHER. He clutches at the earth with both his hands,
And looks as though he were beside himself.

Boy (*advancing*).
What do I see ? Father, come here, and look !

* Rocks on the shore of the Lake of Lucerne.

FISHERMAN (*approaches*).

Who is it? God in Heaven! What! William Tell!
How came you hither? Speak, Tell!

BOY. Were you not
In yonder ship, a prisoner, and in chains?

FISHER. Were they not bearing you away to Küssnacht?

TELL. (*rising*). I am released.

FISHERMAN and BOY. Released, oh miracle!

BOY. . . Whence came you here?

TELL. From yonder vessel!

FISHERMAN. What?

BOY. . . Where is the Viceroy?

TELL. Drifting on the waves.

FISHER. Is't possible? But you! How are you here?

How 'scaped you from your fetters and the storm?

TELL. By God's most gracious providence. Attend.

FISHER. and BOY. Say on, say on!

TELL. You know what passed at Altdorf?

FISHER. I do—say on!

TELL. How I was seized and bound,
And order'd by the governor to Küssnacht.

FISHER. And how with you at Flüelen he embarked.

All this we know. Say, how have you escaped?

TELL. I lay on deck, fast bound with cords, disarm'd,
In utter hopelessness. I did not think
Again to see the gladsome light of day,
Nor the dear faces of my wife and children,
And eyed disconsolate the waste of waters.—

FISHER. Oh, wretched man!

TELL. Then we put forth; the Viceroy,
Rudolph der Harras, and their suite. My bow
And quiver lay astern beside the helm;
And just as we had reached the corner, near
The Little Axen*, Heaven ordain'd it so,
That from the Gotthardt's gorge, a hurricane
Swept down upon us with such headlong force,
That every rower's heart within him sank,
And all on board look'd for a watery grave.
Then heard I one of the attendant train,

* A rock on the shore of the Lake of Lucerne.

Turning to Gessler, in this strain accost him :
 " You see our danger, and your own, my lord,
 And that we hover on the verge of death.
 The boatmen there are powerless from fear,
 Nor are they confident what course to take ;—
 Now, here is Tell, a stout and fearless man,
 And knows to steer with more than common skill.
 How if we should avail ourselves of him
 In this emergency ?" The Viceroy then
 Address'd me thus : " If thou wilt undertake
 To bring us through this tempest safely, Tell,
 I might consent to free thee from thy bonds."
 I answer'd, " Yes, my lord, with God's assistance,
 I'll see what can be done with help of Heaven !"
 On this they loosed me from my bonds, and I
 Stood by the helm and fairly steer'd along ;
 Yet ever eyed my shooting gear askance,
 And kept a watchful eye upon the shore,
 To find some point where I might leap to land :
 And when I had descried a shelving crag,
 That jutted, smooth atop, into the lake—

FISHER. I know't. It lies at foot of the Great Axen.
 But 'tis so steep, I never could have dreamt
 'Twas possible to leap to it from the boat.

TELL. I bade the men put forth their utmost might,
 Until we came before the shelving crag.
 For there, I said, the danger will be past !
 Stoutly they pull'd, and soon we near'd the point ;
 One prayer to God for his assisting grace,
 And straining every muscle, I brought round
 The vessel's stern close to the rocky wall ;
 Then snatching up my weapons, with a bound
 I swung myself upon the flattened shell,
 And with my feet thrust off, with all my might,
 The puny bark into the hell of waters.

There let it drift about, as Heaven ordains !
 Thus am I here, deliver'd from the might
 Of the dread storm, and man, more dreadful still.

FISHER. Tell, Tell, the Lord has manifestly wrought
 A miracle in thy behalf ! I scarce
 Can credit my own eyes. But tell me, now,

Whither you purpose to betake yourself?
For you will be in peril, should the Viceroy
Chance to escape this tempest with his life.

TELL. I heard him say, as I lay bound on board,
His purpose was to disembark at Brunnen;
And, crossing Schwytz, convey me to his castle.

FISHER. Means he to go by land?

TELL. So he intends.

FISHER. Oh, then, conceal yourself without delay!
Not twice will Heaven release you from his grasp.

TELL. Which is the nearest way to Arth and Küssnacht?

FISHER. The public road leads by the way of Steinen,
But there's a nearer road, and more retired,
That goes by Lowerz, which my boy can show you.

TELL (*gives him his hand*). May Heaven reward your kindness! Fare ye well.

[*As he is going, he comes back.*
Did not you also take the oath at Rootli?
I heard your name, methinks.

FISHERMAN. Yes, I was there,
And took the oath of the confederacy.

TELL. Then do me this one favour: speed to Bürglen—
My wife is anxious at my absence—tell her
That I am free, and in secure concealment.

FISHER. But whither shall I tell her you have fled?

TELL. You'll find her father with her, and some more,
Who took the oath with you upon the Rootli;
Bid them be resolute, and strong of heart,—
For Tell is free and master of his arm;
They shall hear further news of me ere long.

FISHER. What have you, then, in view? Come, tell me
frankly!

TELL. When once 'tis done, 'twill be in every mouth. [*Exit.*

FISHER. Show him the way, boy. Heaven be his support!
Whate'er he has resolved, he'll execute. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

Baronial mansion of Attinghausen. The BARON upon a couch dying. WALTER FURST, STAUFFACHER, MELCHTHAL, and BAUMGARTEN attending round him. WALTER TELL kneeling before the dying man.

FURST. All now is over with him. He is gone.

STAUFF. He lies not like one dead. The feather, see,
Moves on his lips ! His sleep is very calm,
And on his features plays a placid smile.

[BAUMGARTEN goes to the door and speaks with
some one.]

FURST. Who's there ?

BAUMGARTEN (returning).

Tell's wife, your daughter, she insists
That she must speak with you, and see her boy.

[WALTER TELL rises.]

FURST. I who need comfort—can I comfort her ?
Does every sorrow centre on my head ?

HEDWIG (forcing her way in).

Where is my child ? Unhand me ! I must see him.

STAUFF. Be calm ! Reflect you're in the house of death !

HEDWIG (falling upon her boy's neck).

My Walter ! Oh, he yet is mine !

WALTER. Dear mother !

HEDW. And is it surely so ? Art thou unhurt ?

[Gazing at him with anxious tenderness.]

And is it possible he aim'd at thee ?

How could he do it ? Oh, he has no heart —

And he could wing an arrow at his child !

FURST. His soul was rack'd with anguish when he did it.

No choice was left him, but to shoot or die !

HEDW. Oh, if he had a father's heart, he would

Have sooner perish'd by a thousand deaths !

STAUFF. You should be grateful for God's gracious care,

That ordered things so well.

HEDWIG. Can I forget

What might have been the issue. God of Heaven !

Were I to live for centuries, I still

Should see my boy tied up,—his father's mark,—

And still the shaft would quiver in my heart !

MELCH. You know not how the Viceroy taunted him !

HEDW. Oh, ruthless heart of man ! Offend his pride,

And reason in his breast forsakes her seat ;

In his blind wrath he'll stake upon a cast

A child's existence, and a mother's heart !

BAUM. Is then your husband's fate not hard enough,

That you embitter it by such repreaches ?

Have you no feeling for his sufferings ?

HEDWIG (*turning to him and gazing full upon him*).

Hast thou tears only for thy friend's distress?
Say, where were you when he—my noble Tell,
Was bound in chains? Where was your friendship
then?

The shameful wrong was done before your eyes;
Patient you stood, and let your friend be dragg'd,
Ay, from your very hands. Did ever Tell
Act thus to you? Did he stand whining by
When on your heels the Viceroy's horsemen press'd,
And full before you roared the storm-toss'd lake?
Oh not with idle tears he show'd his pity;
Into the boat he sprung, forgot his home,
His wife, his children, and delivered thee!

FURST. It had been madness to attempt his rescue.
Unarm'd, and few in numbers as we were?

HEDWIG (*casting herself upon his bosom*).

Oh, father, and thou, too, hast lost my Tell!
The country—all have lost him! All lament
His loss; and, oh, how he must pine for us!
Heaven keep his soul from sinking to despair!
No friend's consoling voice can penetrate
His dreary dungeon walls. Should he fall sick?
Ah! In the vapours of the murky vault
He must fall sick. Even as the Alpine rose
Grows pale and withers in the swampy air,
There is no life for him, but in the sun,
And in the balm of Heaven's refreshing breeze.
Imprison'd! Liberty to him is breath;
He cannot live in the rank dungeon air!

STAUFF. Pray you be calm! And hand in hand, we'll all
Combine to burst his prison doors.

HEDWIG. Without him,
What have you power to do? While Tell was free,
There still, indeed, was hope—weak innocence
Had still a friend, and the oppress'd a stay.
Tell saved you all! You cannot all combined
Release him from his cruel prison bonds.

[*The BARON wakes.*

BAUM. Hush, hush! He starts!

ATTINGHAUSEN (*sitting up*). Where is he?

- STAUFFACHER. Who ?
 ATTINGHAUSEN. He leaves me,—
 In my last moments he abandons me.
- STAUFF. He means his nephew. Have they sent for him?
- FURST. He has been summoned. Cheerly sir! Take comfort!
 He has found his heart at last, and is our own.
- ATTING. Say, has he spoken for his native land?
- STAUFF. Ay, like a hero!
- ATTINGHAUSEN. Wherefore comes he not,
 That he may take my blessing ere I die?
 I feel my life fast ebbing to a close.
- STAUFF. Nay, talk not thus, dear sir! This last short sleep
 Has much refresh'd you, and your eye is bright.
- ATTING. Life is but pain, and even that has left me;
 My sufferings, like my hopes, have pass'd away.
 [*Observing the boy.*
 What boy is that?
- FURST. Bless him. Oh, good my lord!
 He is my grandson, and is fatherless.
 [HEDWIG kneels with the boy before the dying man.
- ATTING. And fatherless—I leave you all, ay all!
 Oh, wretched fate, that these old eyes should see
 My country's ruin, as they close in death!
 Must I attain the utmost verge of life,
 To feel my hopes go with me to the grave?
- STAUFFACHER (to FURST). Shall he depart 'mid grief and gloom like this?
 Shall not his parting moments be illumed
 By hope's delightful beams? My noble lord,
 Raise up your drooping spirit! We are not
 Forsaken quite—past all deliverance.
- ATTING. Who shall deliver you?
- FURST. Ourselves. For know
 The Cantons three are to each other pledged,
 To hunt the tyrants from the land. The league
 Has been concluded, and a sacred oath
 Confirms our union. Ere another year
 Begins its circling course—the blow shall fall.
 In a free land your ashes shall repose.
- ATTING. The league concluded! Is it really so?
- MELCH. On one day shall the Cantons rise together.

All is prepared to strike—and to this hour
 The secret closely kept, though hundreds share it :
 The ground is hollow 'neath the tyrants' feet ;
 Their days of rule are number'd, and ere long
 No trace of their dominion shall remain.

ATTING. Ay, but their castles, how to master them ?

MELCH. On the same day they, too, are doom'd to fall.

ATTING. And are the nobles parties to this league ?

STAUFF. We trust to their assistance should we need it ;
 As yet the peasantry alone have sworn.

ATTING. (*raising himself up, in great astonishment.*)

And have the peasantry dared such a deed
 On their own charge, without the nobles' aid—
 Relied so much on their own proper strength ?
 Nay then, indeed, they want our help no more ;
 We may go down to death cheer'd by the thought,
 That after us the majesty of man
 Will live, and be maintain'd by other hands.

[*He lays his hand upon the head of the child, who
 is kneeling before him.*

From this boy's head, whereon the apple lay,
 Your new and better liberty shall spring ;
 The old is crumbling down—the times are changing—
 And from the ruins blooms a fairer life.

STAUFFACHER (to FURST).

See, see, what splendour streams around his eye !
 This is not Nature's last expiring flame,
 It is the beam of renovated life.

ATTING. From their old towers the nobles are descending,
 And swearing in the towns the civic oath.
 In Uechtland and Thurgau the work's begun ;
 The noble Bern lifts her commanding head,
 And Freyburg is a stronghold of the free ;
 The stirring Zurich calls her guilds to arms ;—
 And now, behold !—the ancient might of kings
 Is shiver'd 'gainst her everlasting walls.

[*He speaks what follows with a prophetic tone ;
 his utterance rising into enthusiasm.*

I see the princes and their haughty peers,
 Clad all in steel, come striding on to crush
 A harmless shepherd race with mailed hand.

Desp'rate the conflict : 'tis for life or death ;
 And many a pass will tell to after years
 Of glorious victories sealed in foemen's blood *.
 The peasant throws himself with naked breast,
 A willing victim on their serried lances.
 They yield—the flower of chivalry's cut down,
 And freedom waves her conquering banner high !

[*Grasps the hands of WALTER FURST and STAUFFACHER.*

Hold fast together, then,—for ever fast !
 Let freedom's haunts be one in heart and mind !
 Set watches on your mountain tops, that league
 May answer league, when comes the hour to strike.
 Be one—be one—be one—

[He falls back upon the cushion. His lifeless hands continue to grasp those of FURST and STAUFFACHER, who regard him for some moments in silence, and then retire, overcome with sorrow. Meanwhile the servants have quietly pressed into the chamber, testifying different degrees of grief. Some kneel down beside him and weep on his body : while this scene is passing, the castle bell tolls.]

RUDENZ (*entering hurriedly*).

Lives he ? Oh say, can he still hear my voice ?

FURST (*averting his face*).

You are our seignior and protector now ;
 Henceforth this castle bears another name.

RUDENZ (*gazing at the body with deep emotion*).

Oh, God ! Is my repentance, then, too late ?
 Could he not live some few brief moments more,
 To see the change that has come o'er my heart ?
 Oh, I was deaf to his true counselling voice
 While yet he walked on earth. Now he is gone,—

* An allusion to the gallant self-devotion of Arnold Struthan of Winkelried, at the battle of Sempach, [9th July, 1386,] who broke the Austrian phalanx by rushing on their lances, grasping as many of them as he could reach, and concentrating them upon his breast. The confederates rushed forward through the gap thus opened by the sacrifice of their comrade, broke and cut down their enemy's ranks, and soon became the masters of the field. "Dear and faithful confederates, I will open you a passage. Protect my wife and children," were the words of Winkelried, as he rushed to death.

Gone, and for ever,—leaving me the debt—
The heavy debt I owe him—undischarged !
Oh, tell me ! did he part in anger with me ?

STAUFF. When dying, he was told what you had done,
And bless'd the valour that inspired your words !

RUDENZ (*kneeling down beside the dead body*).
Yes, sacred relics of a man beloved !

Thou lifeless corpse ! Here, on thy death-cold hand,
Do I abjure all foreign ties for ever !
And to my country's cause devote myself.
I am a Switzer, and will act as one,
With my whole heart and soul.

[Rises.]

Mourn for our friend,

Our common parent, yet be not dismay'd !
'Tis not alone his lands that I inherit,—
His heart—his spirit, have devolved on me ;
And my young arm shall execute the task,
For which his hoary age remain'd your debtor.
Give me your hands, ye venerable fathers !
Thine, Melchthal, too ! Nay, do not hesitate,
Nor from me turn distrustfully away.
Accept my plighted vow—my knightly oath !

FURST. Give him your hands, my friends ! A heart like his,
That sees and owns its error, claims our trust.

MELCH. You ever held the peasantry in scorn,
What surely have we, that you mean us fair ?

RUD. . . Oh, think not of the error of my youth !

STAUFFACHER (*to MELCHTHAL*).

Be one ! They were our father's latest words.
See they be not forgotten !

MELCH. Take my hand,—

A peasant's hand,—and with it, noble sir,
The gage and the assurance of a man !
Without us, sir, what would the nobles be ?
Our order is more ancient, too, than yours !

RUD. . . I honour it, and with my sword will shield it !

MELCH. The arm, my lord, that tames the stubborn earth,
And makes its bosom blossom with increase,
Can also shield a man's defenceless breast.

RUD. . . Then you shall shield my breast, and I will yours ;
Thus each be strengthen'd by the others aid !

Yet wherefore talk we, while our native land
 Is still to alien tyranny a prey?
 First let us sweep the foeman from the soil,
 Then reconcile our difference in peace!

[*After a moment's pause.*

How! You are silent! Not a word for me?
 And have I yet no title to your trust?—
 Then must I force my way, despite your will,
 Into the League you secretly have form'd.
 You've held a Diet on the Rootli,—I
 Know this,—know all that was transacted there!
 And though I was not trusted with your secret,
 I still have kept it like a sacred pledge.
 Trust me, I never was my country's foe,
 Nor would I e'er have ranged myself against you!
 Yet you did wrong—your rising to defer.
 Time presses! We must strike, and swiftly too!
 Already Tell has fallen a sacrifice
 To your delay.

STAUFF. We swore to wait till Christmas.

RUD. . . . I was not there,—I did not take the oath.
 If you delay, I will not!

MELCHTHAL. What! You would—

RUD. . . . I count me now among the country's fathers,
 And to protect you is my foremost duty.

FURST. Within the earth to lay these dear remains,
 That is your nearest and most sacred duty.

RUD. . . . When we have set the country free, we'll place
 Our fresh victorious wreaths upon his bier.
 Oh, my dear friends, 'tis not your cause alone!—
 I have a cause to battle with the tyrants,
 That more concerns myself. Know, that my Bertha
 Has disappear'd,—been carried off by stealth,—
 Stolen from amongst us by their ruffian hands!

STAUFF. And has the tyrant dared so fell an outrage
 Against a lady free and nobly born?

RUD. . . . Alas! my friends, I promised help to you,
 And I must first implore it for myself!
 She that I love, is stolen—is forced away,
 And who knows where the tyrant has conceal'd her,
 Or with what outrages his ruffian crew

May force her into nuptials she detests ?
 Forsake me not !—Oh help me to her rescue.
 She loves you ! Well, oh well, has she deserved,
 That all should rush to arms in her behalf !

STAUFF. What course do you propose ?

RUDENZ. Alas ! I know not.

In the dark mystery that shrouds her fate,—
 In the dread agony of this suspense,—
 Where I can grasp at nought of certainty,
 One single ray of comfort beams upon me.
 From out the ruins of the tyrant's power
 Alone can she be rescued from the grave.
 Their strongholds must be levell'd ! every one,
 Ere we can pierce into her gloomy prison.

MELCH. Come, lead us on ! We follow ! Why defer
 Until to-morrow, what to-day may do ?
 Tell's arm was free when we at Rootli swore,
 This foul enormity was yet undone.
 And change of circumstance brings change of law ;
 Who such a coward as to waver still ?

RUDENZ (*to WALTER FURST*).

Meanwhile to arms, and wait in readiness
 The fiery signal on the mountain tops.
 For swifter than a boat can scour the lake
 Shall you have tidings of our victory ;
 And when you see the welcome flames ascend,
 Then, like the lightning, swoop upon the foe,
 And lay the despots and their creatures low !

SCENE III.

The pass near Küssnacht, sloping down from behind, with rocks on either side. The travellers are visible upon the heights, before they appear on the stage. Rocks all round the stage. Upon one of the foremost a projecting cliff overgrown with brushwood.

TELL (*enters with his crossbow*).

Here thro' this deep defile he needs must pass ;
 There leads no other road to Küssnacht :—here
 I'll do it :—the opportunity is good.
 You alder tree stands well for my concealment,
 Thence my avenging shaft will surely reach him ;

The straitness of the path forbids pursuit.
Now, Gessler, balance thine account with Heaven !
Thou must away from earth,—thy sand is run.

I led a peaceful inoffensive life ;—
My bow was bent on forest game alone,
And my pure soul was free from thoughts of murder—
But thou hast scared me from my dream of peace ;
The milk of human kindness thou hast turn'd
To rankling poison in my breast ; and made
Appalling deeds familiar to my soul.
He who could make his own child's head his mark,
Can speed his arrow to his foeman's heart.

My children dear, my lov'd and faithful wife,
Must be protected, tyrant, from thy fury !—
When last I drew my bow—with trembling hand—
And thou, with murderous joy, a father forced
To level at his child—when, all in vain,
Writhing before thee, I implored thy mercy—
Then in the agony of my soul, I vow'd
A fearful oath, which met God's ear alone,
That when my bow next wing'd an arrow's flight,
Its aim should be thy heart.—The vow I made,
Amid the hellish torments of that moment,
I hold a sacred debt, and I will pay it.

Thou art my lord, my Emperor's delegate ;
Yet would the Emperor not have stretch'd his power
So far as thou.—He sent thee to these Cantons
To deal forth law—stern law—for he is anger'd ;
But not to wanton with unbridled will
In every cruelty, with fiend-like joy :—
There is a God to punish and avenge.

Come forth, thou bringer once of bitter pangs,
My precious jewel now,—my chiefest treasure—
A mark I'll set thee, which the cry of grief
Could never penetrate,—but thou shalt pierce it.—
And thou, my trusty bowstring, that so oft
Has served me faithfully in sportive scenes,

Desert me not in this most serious hour.—
Only be true this once, my own good cord,
That hast so often wing'd the biting shaft:—
For shouldst thou fly successless from my hand,
I have no second to send after thee.

[*Travellers pass over the stage.*

I'll sit me down upon this bench of stone,
Hewn for the way-worn traveller's brief repose—
For here there is no home.—Each hurries by
The other, with quick step and careless look,
Nor stays to question of his grief.—Here goes
The merchant, full of care,—the pilgrim, next,
With slender scrip,—and then the pious monk,
The scowling robber, and the jovial player,
The carrier with his heavy-laden horse,
That comes to us from the far haunts of men;
For every road conducts to the world's end.
They all push onwards—every man intent
Each on his separate business—mine is murder.

[*Sits down.*

Time was, my dearest children, when with joy
You hail'd your father's safe return to home
From his long mountain toils; for, when he came,
He ever brought some little present with him.
A lovely Alpine flower—a curious bird—
Or elf-boat, found by wanderer on the hills.—
But now he goes in quest of other game:
In the wild pass he sits, and broods on murder;
And watches for the life-blood of his foe.—
But still his thoughts are fixed on you alone,
Dear children.—'Tis to guard your innocence,
To shield you from the tyrant's fell revenge,
He bends his bow to do a deed of blood! [Rises.

Well—I am watching for a noble prey—
Dees not the huntsman, with severest toil,
Roam for whole days, amid the winter's cold,
Leap with a daring bound from rock to rock,—
And climb the jagged, slippery steeps, to which
His limbs are glued by his own streaming blood—

And all this but to gain a wretched chamois !
 A far more precious prize is now my aim—
 The heart of that dire foe, who would destroy me.

[Sprightly music heard in the distance, which comes gradually nearer.]

From my first years of boyhood I have used
 The bow—been practised in the archer's feats ;
 The bull's eye many a time my shafts have hit,
 And many a goodly prize have I brought home,
 Won in the games of skill.—This day I'll make
 My master-shot, and win the highest prize
 Within the whole circumference of the mountains.

[A marriage train passes over the stage, and goes up the pass. TELL gazes at it, leaning on his bow. He is joined by STUSSI the Ranger.]

STUSSI. There goes the bridal party of the steward
 Of Mörlischachen's cloister. He is rich !
 And has some ten good pastures on the Alps.
 He goes to fetch his bride from Imisee,
 There will be revelry to-night at Küssnacht.
 Come with us—ev'ry honest man's invited.

TELL. A gloomy guest fits not a wedding feast.

STUSSI. If grief oppress you, dash it from your heart !
 Bear with your lot. The times are heavy now,
 And we must snatch at pleasure while we can.
 Here 'tis a bridal, there a burial.

TELL. And oft the one treads close upon the other.

STUSSI. So runs the world at present. Everywhere
 We meet with woe and misery enough.
 There's been a slide of earth in Glarus, and
 A whole side of the Glärnisch has fallen in.

TELL. Strange ! And do even the hills begin to totter ?
 There is stability for nought on earth.

STUSSI. Strange tidings, too, we hear from other parts.
 I spoke with one but now, that came from Baden,
 Who said a knight was on his way to court,
 And, as he rode along, a swarm of wasps
 Surrounded him, and settling on his horse,
 So fiercely stung the beast, that it fell dead,
 And he proceeded to the court on foot.

TELL. Even the weak are furnish'd with a sting.

ARMGART (*enters with several children, and places herself at the entrance of the pass*).

STUSSI. 'Tis thought to bode disaster to the country,—
Some horrid deed against the course of nature.

TELL. Why, every day brings forth such fearful deeds;
There needs no miracle to tell their coming.

STUSSI. Too true! He's bless'd, who tills his field in peace,
And sits untroubled by his own fireside.

TELL. The very meekest cannot rest in quiet,
Unless it suits with his ill neighbour's humour.

[TELL looks frequently with restless expectation towards the top of the pass.]

STUSSI. So fare you well! You're waiting some one here?

TELL. I am.

STUSSI. A pleasant meeting with your friends!
You are from Uri, are you not? His grace
The governor's expected thence to-day.

TRAVELLER (*entering*).

Look not to see the governor to-day.
The streams are flooded by the heavy rains,
And all the bridges have been swept away.

[TELL rises.]

ARMGART (*coming forward*).

The Viceroy not arriv'd?

STUSSI. And do you seek him?

ARM... Alas, I do!

STUSSI. But why thus place yourself
Where you obstruct his passage down the pass?

ARM... Here he cannot escape me. He must hear me.

FRIESS. (*coming hastily down the pass, and calls upon the stage*).
Make way, make way! My lord, the governor,
Is coming down on horseback close behind me.

[Exit TELL.]

ARMGART (*with animation*).

The Viceroy comes!

[She goes towards the pass with her children.
GESSLER and RUDOLPH DER HARRAS appear upon the heights on horseback.]

STUSSI (*to FRIESCHARDT*). How got ye through the stream,
When all the bridges have been carried down?

FRIESS. We've battled with the billows; and, my friend,
An Alpine torrent's nothing after that.

STUSSI. How! Were you out, then, in that dreadful storm?

FRIESS. Ay, that we were! I shall not soon forget it.

STUSSI. Stay, speak—

FRIESS. I cannot. I must to the castle,
And tell them, that the governor's at hand. [Exit.]

STUSSI. If honest men, now, had been in the ship,
It had gone down with every soul on board:—
Some folks are proof 'gainst fire and water both.

[Looking round.
Where has the huntsman gone, with whom I spoke?]

[Exit.]

Enter GESSLER and RUDOLPH DER HARRAS on horseback.

GESSL. Say what you please; I am the Emperor's servant,
And my first care must be to do his pleasure.
He did not send me here to fawn and cringe
And coax these boors into good humour. No!
Obedience he must have. We soon shall see,
If king or peasant is to lord it here?

ARM. . . Now is the moment! Now for my petition!

GESSL. 'Twas not in sport that I set up the cap
In Altdorf—or to try the people's hearts—
All this I knew before. I set it up
That they might learn to bend those stubborn necks
They carry far too proudly—and I placed
What well I knew their eyes could never brook
Full in the road, which they perforce must pass,
That, when their eye fell on it, they might call
That lord to mind whom they too much forgot.

HAR. . . But surely, sir, the people have some rights—

GESSL. This is no time to settle what they are.
Great projects are at work, and hatching now.
The Imperial house seeks to extend its power.
Those vast designs of conquest, which the sire
Has gloriously begun, the son will end.
This petty nation is a stumbling-block—
One way or other, it must be subjected.

[They are about to pass on. ARMGART throws
herself down before GESSLER.]

ARM. . . . Mercy, lord governor ! Oh, pardon, pardon !

GESSL. Why do you cross me on the public road ?
Stand back, I say.

ARMGART. My husband lies in prison ;

My wretched orphans cry for bread. Have pity,
Pity, my lord, upon our sore distress !

HAR. . . . Who are you, woman ; and who is your husband ?

ARM. . . . A poor wild-hay-man of the Rigiberg,
Kind sir, who on the brow of the abyss,
Mows down the grass from steep and craggy shelves,
To which the very cattle dare not climb.

HARRAS (*to Gessler*).

By Heaven ! a sad and miserable life !
I prithee, give the wretched man his freedom.
How great soever his offence may be,
His horrid trade is punishment enough.

[*To Armgart.*

You shall have justice. To the castle bring
Your suit. This is no place to deal with it.

ARM. . . . No, no, I will not stir from where I stand,
Until your grace restore my husband to me.
Six months already has he been in prison,
And waits the sentence of a judge in vain.

GESSL. How ! would you force me, woman ? Hence ! Begone !

ARM. . . . Justice, my lord ! Ay, justice ! Thou art judge :
The deputy of the Emperor—of Heaven.

Then do thy duty,—as thou hopest for justice
From Him who rules above, show it to us !

GESSL. Hence, drive this daring mob out of my sight !

ARMGART (*seizing his horse's reins*).

No, no, by Heaven, I've nothing more to lose.—
Thou stirr'st not, Viceroy, from this spot, until
Thou dost me fullest justice. Knit thy brows,
And roll thy eyes—I fear not. Our distress
Is so extreme, so boundless, that we care
No longer for thine anger.

GESSLER. Woman, hence !

Give way, I say, or I will ride thee down.

ARM. . . . Well, do so—there—

[*Throws her children and herself upon the ground
before him.*

Here on the ground I lie,
 I and my children. Let the wretched orphans
 Be trodden by thy horse into the dust !
 It will not be the worst, that thou hast done.

HAR... Are you mad, woman ?

ARMGART (*continuing with vehemence*).

Many a day thou hast
 Trampled the Emperor's lands beneath thy feet.
 Oh, I am but a woman ! Were I man,
 I'd find some better thing to do, than here
 Lie grovelling in the dust.

[*The music of the wedding party is again heard
 from the top of the pass, but more softly.*

GESSSLER. Where are my knaves ?

Drag her away, lest I forget myself,
 And do some deed I may repent hereafter.

HAR... My lord, the servants cannot force a passage ;
 The pass is block'd up by a marriage party.

GESSLER. Too mild a ruler am I to this people,
 Their tongues are all too bold—nor have they yet
 Been tamed to due submission, as they shall be.
 I must take order for the remedy ;
 I will subdue this stubborn mood of theirs,
 And crush the Soul of Liberty within them.
 I'll publish a new law throughout the lands ;
 I will—

[*An arrow pierces him,—he puts his hand on his
 heart and is about to sink—with a feeble voice,*

Oh God, have mercy on my soul !

HAR... My lord ! my lord ! Oh God ! What's this ? Whence
 came it ?

ARMGART (*starts up*).

Dead, dead ! He reels, he falls ! 'Tis in his heart !

HARRAS (*springs from his horse*).

This is most horrible ! Oh Heavens ! sir knight,
 Address yourself to God and pray for mercy,—
 You are a dying man.

GESSSLER. That shot was Tell's.

[*He slides from his horse into the arms of RU-
 DOLPH DER HARRAS, who lays him down upon
 the bench. TELL appears above upon the rocks.*

TELL. Thou know'st the archer, seek no other hand.
Our cottages are free, and innocence
Secure from thee : thoult be our curse no more.

[TELL disappears. *People rush in.*

STUSSI. What is the matter ? Tell me what has happen'd ?
ARM... The governor is shot,—kill'd by an arrow !
PEOPLE (*running in*). Who has been shot ?

[*While the foremost of the marriage party are coming on the stage, the hindmost are still upon the heights. The music continues.*

HARRAS. . . . He's bleeding fast to death.
Away, for help—pursue the murderer !
Unhappy man, is't thus that thou must die ?
Thou wouldest not heed the warnings that I gave thee !

STUSSI. By Heaven, his cheek is pale ! His life ebbs fast.
MANY VOICES.

Who did the deed ?

HARRAS. What ! Are the people mad,
That they make music to a murder ? Silence !
[*Music breaks off suddenly. People continue to flock in.*
Speak, if thou canst, my lord. Hast thou no charge
To intrust me with ?

[*GESSLER makes signs with his hand, which he repeats with vehemence, when he finds they are not understood.*

What would you have me do ?
Shall I to Küssnacht ? I can't guess your meaning.
Do not give way to this impatience. Leave
All thoughts of earth, and make your peace with
Heaven.

[*The whole marriage party gather round the dying man.*

STUSSI. See there ! how pale he grows ! Death's gathering now

About his heart :—his eyes grow dim and glazed.

ARNGAERT (*holds up a child*).

Look, children, how a tyrant dies !

HARRAS.

Mad hag!

Have you no touch of feeling, that you look
 On horrors such as these, without a shudder?
 Help me—take hold. What, will not one assist
 To pull the torturing arrow from his breast?

WOMEN. We touch the man whom God's own hand has struck!

HAR. . . All curses light on you! [Draws his sword.]

STUSSI (*seizes his arm*). Gently, sir knight!

Your power is at an end. 'Twere best forbear.
 Our country's foe is fallen. We shall feel
 No further violence. We are free men.

ALL. The country's free!

HARRAS. And is it come to this?

Fear and obedience at an end so soon?

[*To the soldiers of the guard, who are thronging in.*
 You see, my friends, the bloody piece of work
 They've acted here. 'Tis now too late for help,
 And to pursue the murderer were in vain.
 New duties claim our care. Set on to Küssnacht,
 And let us save that fortress for the king!
 For in an hour like this, all ties of order,
 Fealty and faith, are scatter'd to the winds.
 No man's fidelity is to be trusted.

[*As he is going out with the soldiers, six FRATRES MISERICORDIA appear.*

ARM. . . Here come the brotherhood of mercy. Room!

STUSSI. The victim's slain, and now the ravens stoop.

BROTHERS OF MERCY (*form a semicircle round the body, and sing in solemn tones*).

With hasty step death presses on,
 Nor grants to man a moment's stay,
 He falls ere half his race be run,
 In manhood's pride is swept away :
 Prepar'd, or unprepar'd, to die,
 He stands before his Judge on high.

[*While they are repeating the two last lines, the curtain falls.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.

A common near Altdorf. In the background to the right the Keep of Uri, with the scaffold still standing, as in the Third Scene of the first Act. To the left, the view opens upon numerous mountains, on all of which signal fires are burning. Day is breaking, and bells are heard ringing from various distances.

RUODI, KUONI, WERNI, MASTER MASON, and many other country people, also women and children.

RUODI. Look at the fiery signals on the mountains!

MASON. Hark to the bells above the forest there!

RUODI. The enemy's expelled.

MASON. The forts are taken.

RUODI. And we of Uri, do we still endure
Upon our native soil, the tyrant's Keep ?
Are we the last to strike for liberty ?

MASON. Shall the yoke stand, that was to bow our necks ?
Up ! Tear it to the ground !

ALL. Down, down with it !

RUODI. Where's the Stier of Uri ?

URI. . . Here. What would ye ?

RUODI. Up to your tower, and wind us such a blast,
As shall resound afar, from hill to hill ;
Rousing the echoes of each peak and glen,
And call the mountain men in haste together !

[Exit STIER OF URI—enter WALTER FURST.

FURST. Stay, stay, my friends ! As yet we have not learn'd
What has been done in Unterwald and Schwytz.
Let's wait till we receive intelligence !

RUODI. Wait, wait for what ? The accursed tyrant's dead,
And the bright day of liberty has dawn'd !

MASON. How ! Do these flaming signals not suffice,
That blaze on every mountain top around ?

RUODI. Come all, fall to—come, men and women, all !
Destroy the scaffold ! Tear the arches down !
Down with the walls ; let not a stone remain !

MASON. Come, comrades, come ! We built it, and we know
How best to hurl it down.

ALL.

Come! Down with it!

[They fall upon the building at every side.]

FURST. The floodgate's burst They're not to be restrained.

*[Enter MELCHTHAL and BAUMGARTEN.]*MELCH. What! Stands the fortress still, when Sarnen lies
In ashes, and when Rossberg is a ruin?FURST. You, Melchthal, here? D'ye bring us liberty?
Say, have you freed the country of the foe?MELCH. We've swept them from the soil. Rejoice, my friend;
Now, at this very moment, while we speak,
There's not a tyrant left in Switzerland!

FURST. How did you get the forts into your power?

MELCH. Rudenz it was who with a gallant arm,
And manly daring, took the keep at Sarnen.
I had the Rossberg storm'd the night before.
But hear, what chanced. Scarce had we driven the foe
Forth from the keep, and given it to the flames,
That now rose crackling upwards to the skies,
When from the blaze rush'd Diethelm, Gessler's page,
Exclaiming, "Lady Bertha will be burnt!"

FURST. Good heavens!

*[The beams of the scaffold are heard falling.]*MELCH. Twas she herself. Here had she been
Immured in secret by the Viceroy's orders.
Rudenz sprang up in frenzy. For we heard
The beams and massive pillars crashing down,
And through the volumed smoke the piteous shrieks
Of the unhappy lady.

FURST. Is she saved?

MELCH. Here was a time for promptness and decision!
Had he been nothing but our baron, then
We should have been most chary of our lives;
But he was our confederate, and Bertha
Honour'd the people. So, without a thought,
We risk'd the worst, and rush'd into the flames.

FURST. But is she saved?

MELCH. She is. Rudenz and I
Bore her between us from the blazing pile,
With crashing timbers toppling all around.
And when she had revived, the danger past,
And raised her eyes to meet the light of heaven,

The baron fell upon my breast ; and then
 A silent vow of friendship pass'd between us—
 A vow that, temper'd in yon furnace heat,
 Will last through ev'ry shock of time and fate.

FURST. Where is the Landenberg?

MELCH. Across the Brünig.

No fault of mine it was, that he, who quench'd
 My father's eyesight, should go hence unhar'm'd.
 He fled—I followed—overtook and seized him,
 And dragg'd him to my father's feet. The sword
 Already quiver'd o'er the caitiff's head,
 When at the entreaty of the blind old man,
 I spared the life for which he basely pray'd.
 He swore URPHEDA *, never to return :
 He'll keep his oath, for he has felt our arm.

FURST. Thank God, our victory's unstain'd by blood!

CHILDREN (*running across the stage with fragments of wood*).
 Liberty ! Liberty ! Hurrah, we're free !

FURST. Oh ! what a joyous scene ! These children will,
 E'en to their latest day, remember it.

[*Girls bring in the cap upon a pole. The whole stage is filled with people.*

RUODI. Here is the cap, to which we were to bow !

BAUM. . Command us, how we shall dispose of it.

FURST. Heavens ! 'Twas beneath this cap my grandson stood !

SEVERAL VOICES.

Destroy the emblem of the tyrant's power !
 Let it be burnt !

FURST. No. Rather be preserved !

'Twas once the instrument of despots—now
 'Twill be a lasting symbol of our freedom.

[*Peasants, men, women, and children, some standing, others sitting upon the beams of the shattered scaffold, all picturesquely grouped, in a large semicircle.*

MELCH. Thus now, my friends, with light and merry hearts,

* The URPHEDA was an oath of peculiar force. When a man, who was at feud with another, invaded his lands and was worsted, he often made terms with his enemy by swearing the Urphede, by which he bound himself to depart, and never to return with a hostile intention.

We stand upon the wreck of tyranny ;
 And gallantly have we fulfill'd the oath,
 Which we at Rootli swore, Confederates !

FURST. The work is but begun. We must be firm.
 For, be assured, the king will make all speed,
 To avenge his Viceroy's death, and reinstate,
 By force of arms, the tyrant we've expell'd.

MELCH. Why let him come, with all his armaments !
 The foe within has fled before our arms ;
 We'll give him welcome warmly from without !

RUODI. The passes to the country are but few ;
 And these we'll boldly cover with our bodies.

BAUM. . We are bound by an indissoluble league,
 And all his armies shall not make us quail.

[Enter ROSELLEMAN and STAUFFACHER.]

ROSELLEMAN (*speaking as he enters*).

These are the awful judgments of the Lord !

PEAS. . What is the matter ?

ROSELLEMAN. In what times we live !

FURST. Say on, what is't ? Ha, Werner, is it you ?
 What tidings ?

PEASANT. What's the matter ?

ROSELLEMAN. Hear and wonder !

STAUFF. We are released from one great cause of dread.

ROSEL. The Emperor is murdered.

FURST. Gracious Heaven !

[PEASANTS *rise up and throng round STAUFFACHER.*

ALL. . . Murder'd the Emp'ror ? What ! The Emp'ror ! Hear !

MELCH. Impossible ! How came you by the news ?

STAUFF. 'Tis true ! Near Bruck, by the assassin's hand,
 King Albert fell. A most trustworthy man,
 John Müller, from Schaffhausen, brought the news.

FURST. Who dared commit so horrible a deed ?

STAUFF. The doer makes the deed more dreadful still ;
 It was his nephew, his own brother's child,

Duke John of Austria, who struck the blow.

MELCH. What drove him to the crime of parricide ?

STAUFF. The Emp'ror kept his patrimony back,
 Despite his urgent importunities ;

'Twas said, indeed, he never meant to give it,
But with a mitre to appease the duke.
However this may be, the duke gave ear
To the ill counsel of his friends in arms;
And with the noble lords, Von Eschenbach,
Von Tegerfeld, Von Wart and Palm, resolved,
Since his demands for justice were despised,
With his own hands to take revenge at least.

FURST. But say, how compass'd he the dreadful deed?

STAUFF. The king was riding down from Stein to Baden,

Upon his way to join the court at Rheinfeld,—

With him a train of high-born gentlemen,

And the young Princes John and Leopold.

And when they'd reach'd the ferry of the Reuss,

The assassins forced their way into the boat,

To separate the Emperor from his suite.

His highness landed, and was riding on

Across a fresh plough'd field—where once, they say,

A mighty city stood in Pagan times—

With Habsburg's ancient turrets full in sight,

Where all the grandeur of his line had birth—

When Duke John plunged a dagger in his throat,

Palm ran him thro' the body with his lance,

Eschenbach cleft his skull at one fell blow,

And down he sank, all weltering in his blood,

On his own soil, by his own kinsmen slain.

Those on the opposite bank, who saw the deed,

Being parted by the stream, could only raise

An unavailing cry of loud lament.

But a poor woman, sitting by the way,

Raised him, and in her breast he bled to death.

MELCH. Thus has he dug his own untimely grave,

Who sought insatiably to grasp at all.

STAUFF. The country round is fill'd with dire alarm.

The passes of the mountains all are watch'd,

And sentinels on ev'ry frontier set;

E'en ancient Zurich barricades her gates,

That for these thirty years have open stood,

Dreading the murd'lers, and th' avengers mare.

For cruel Agnes comes, the Hungarian queen,

To all her sex's tenderness a stranger,
 Arm'd with the thunders of the church, to wreak
 Dire vengeance for her parent's royal blood,
 On the whole race of those that murder'd him,—
 Upon their servants, children, and descendants,—
 Nay, on the stones that build their castle walls.
 Upon her father's tomb she's made a vow
 To insatiate whole generations, and
 To bathe in blood as in the dew of May.

- MELCH. Know you which way the murderers have fled ?
 STAUFF. No sooner had they done the deed, than they
 Took flight, each following a different route,
 And parted, ne'er to see each other more.
 Duke John must still be wand'ring in the mountains.
 FURST. And thus their crime has yielded them no fruits.
 Revenge is barren of itself. It makes
 The dreadful food it feeds on ; its delight
 Is murder—its satiety despair.
 STAUFF. The assassins reap no profit by their crime ;
 But we shall pluck with unpolluted hands
 The teeming fruits of their ensanguined deed.
 For we are ransomed from our heaviest fear ;
 The direst foe of liberty has fallen,
 And, 'tis reported, that the crown will pass
 From Habsburg's house into another line ;
 The Empire is determined to assert
 Its old prerogative of choice, I hear.

FURST and several others.

Has any one been named to you ?

STAUFFAGNER. The Count
 Of Luxembourg is widely named already.—
 'Tis well we stood so staunchly by the Empire !
 Now we may hope for justice, and with cause.

STAUFF. The Emperor will need some valiant friends ;
 He'll shelter us from Austria's dire revenge.

[*The peasantry embrace. Enter SACRIST with unrec-*
perial messenger.

SACRIST. Here are the worthy chiefs of Switzerland !

ROSSELMANN and several others.

Sacrist, what news ?

